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# LIVES OF INDIAN OFFICERS.

BY

SIR J. W. KAYE,

AUTHOR OF 'HISTORY OF THE SEPOY WAR' 'THE WAR IN  
AFGHANISTAN,' ETC., ETC.

*IN TWO VOLUMES—Vol. II.*

*(Each volume complete in itself)*

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# LIVES

OF

## INDIAN OFFICERS.

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SIR ALEXANDER BURNES.

[BORN 1803.--DIED 1841.]

ENTERING upon the last year of the last century, a youth from the Scotch borough of Montrose, who had gone up to London to seek his fortune, wrote to his mother, saying: 'I have passed many a serious hour, reflecting on, weighing, examining minutely, the advantages and disadvantages, which are likely to follow my conduct in the different plans proposed, and I find the result in favour of going to India on the establishment. Perhaps my wishes to obtain, or my favourable ideas of, that situation have biased my judgment, and prevented me from seeing every circumstance as it ought to have been seen; so I will say little more on the subject, except to inform you of what distresses me greatly, but will perhaps please you—viz. the uncertainty of succeeding as I could wish.' The letter, from which this extract is taken, is signed 'Your loving and affectionate Son, JOSEPH HUME.'

Twenty years afterwards, the writer, who had been thus doubtful of his power to obtain an appointment on the Indian establishment for himself, was able to obtain appointments for others. He had become a man of great influence

in his native town. He had gone out to India poor, and he had returned rich, whilst still in the very prime of his life. He had returned to take a distinguished part in public affairs, with thirty or forty years of good life and of good service still remaining in him. It was a natural and a laudable ambition that he should seek to represent his native town in the great imperial Parliament, and to do for it and its people all the good that lay in his power; so he canvassed the borough and its dependencies in the liberal interests, and in 1818 was duly returned.\*

The success of Joseph Hume was great encouragement to the youth of Montrose. He had taken his first start from a very humble beginning, and he had risen solely by the force of his own personal energy. Might not others do the same? Moreover, the success of Joseph Hume was something more than an encouragement to the young men of the borough. It was an assistance to them. He had become an influential member of the Court of Proprietors of East India Stock, and he had, therefore, 'interest at the India House.' It must be admitted that for very many years what was familiarly called 'borough-mongering,' was the main cause of so many doughty young Scots finding their way into the Indian services. Practically, this was a happy circumstance. At all events, it bore good fruit. But for this, the Company's army might have been wanting in that muscular sinewy strength imparted to it by a constant recruiting from the middle classes of

\* The Montrose Burghs then included Montrose, Brechin, Arbroath, Bervie, and Aberdeen. Mr Hume had previously represented Weymouth in Parliament.

the North. The Scotch member, in *esse* or in *posse*, may have thought about nothing but his seat; but it was often his good fortune 'to entertain angels unaware,' and to count among the happy circumstances of his life that he had 'sent to India' a Malcolm, an Ochterlony, or a Munro.

Some of these happy circumstances were recalled with pleasure and with gratitude at the close of a well-spent life by Mr Joseph Hume. Of one of them I am now about to write. In the first quarter of the present century there dwelt at Montrose a family bearing the name of Burnes. The family was of the same stock as that from which had sprung the inspired ploughman of Ayrshire, though the two branches of the family were pleased to spell their names after different fashions. The grandfather of Robert Burns, the poet, and the grandfather of James Burnes, writer to the signet, burgess of Montrose, and head of the family of which I am now writing, were brothers. In the first year of the century, James Burnes married a daughter of Adam Glegg, chief magistrate of Montrose, and in due course had fourteen children, nine of whom lived to be adults. Of these nine children the four eldest were sons. The first-born was named James, after his father; the second Adam after his maternal grandfather; the third Robert; and the fourth Alexander, after whom called I know not, but there could have been no better name for one who was destined to do great things in the countries watered by the Indus and bounded by the Caucasian range. He often used to say, in later days, that he found his name a help to him. In Afghanistan he was always known as 'Sekunder Burnes,'



and Sekunder (Alexander) has been a great name in that part of the world ever since the great days of the Greek occupation.

Mr James Burnes was, I have said, a burgess of Montrose. He was a man greatly respected by the townspeople, both for his integrity and ability, and he came to be provost of the borough, and recorder or town-clerk. For many years he took an active part in the local politics of the place, and there were few places in which local politics occupied so much of the time and the thoughts of the good people of a country town. The influence of Provost Burnes was, of course, great in the borough. It was no small thing for a candidate for the representation of Montrose and its dependencies to have the Burnes interest on his side. He was not a man to forsake his principles for gain; but there was no reason why, with four stout clever boys pressing forward for employment, and eager to make their fortunes, he should not endeavour to turn his influence to good account for the benefit of his children. He was very useful to Mr Hume, and Mr Hume, in turn, was well disposed to be useful to the family of Burnes. In truth, the tide of liberal politics was somewhat high and heady at that time; and even the children of the worthy burgess's household were no indifferent observers of passing events, but had their bursts of political excitement like their elders. The acquittal of Queen Caroline produced as great a fervour of exultation in that distant seaport town as it did in Westminster or Hammersmith; and one of the Burnes boys, who had at a very early age habituated himself to keep a diary, then

recorded in its pages : ' November 14, 1820. News came of the rejection by the House of Lords of the Bill of Pains and Penalties against the Queen. No schooling on account of it. . . . November 15. A most brilliant illumination took place in Montrose and the surrounding neighbourhood, on account of the glorious triumph the Queen had obtained over her base and abominable accusers. Many devices were exhibited, one in the Town-hall with a green bag all tattered and torn ; in another window, a figure of the Queen, with the word "Triumphant," and above it "C. R." The display of fireworks was unlimited. Two boats were burned, and some tar-barrels, and upon the whole it did great credit to Montrose.'

The writer of this journal was Alexander Burnes, the third surviving son, then fifteen years of age, and a student in the Montrose Academy, the head-master of which, Mr Calvert, had something more than a local reputation as a distinguished classical scholar and a highly successful teacher—as men taught in those days with the book in one hand and the scourge in the other. He was a clever, in some respects, perhaps, a precocious boy ; and had learnt as much in the way, both of classics and of mathematics, as most promising striplings of his age. He had read, too, some books of history, and a few of the masterpieces of English poetry. He belonged to a debating society, and was not altogether unskilled in disputation. Like other high-spirited boys, he had taken part in conflicts of a more dangerous character than mere conflicts of words, and fought some hard battles with the boys of the town. Altogether, though not to be

accounted a prodigy, he was a youth of high spirit and good promise, and had in him some of the stuff of which heroes are made.

But I can find nothing in the record of Alexander Burnes's early life to warrant the conclusion that the bent of his mind towards foreign travel was then in any way discernible. What little I can find in his papers rather bears the other way. I have before me a collection, in his own writing, of the speeches he delivered at the 'Montrose Juvenile Debating Society,' the thesis of one of which (proposed by himself) is, 'Whether reading or travelling is most advantageous for the acquisition of knowledge?' To this the 'juvenile debater' replied: 'My opinion on the present subject is, that reading is the most advantageous for the acquisition of knowledge.' And then he proceeded to illustrate this opinion, by reading to the meeting an interesting extract from the recently published travels of the African traveller, Belzoni. Having done this, he said: 'Now, to have it in our power to amuse ourselves any night we please with the book which contains all these disasters, without the labour which has been encountered, shows in the clearest light the advantages derived from that most delightful and pleasing amusement, reading.' This is charmingly illogical. The young debater forgot, in his enthusiastic admiration of the book that had given him so much pleasure, that there could have been no 'reading' in this case if there had been no 'travelling.' Certainly it would have been difficult to cite a more unfortunate illustration of the views of the juvenile speaker. It is possible that when, in after life, he came to gather up his ideas a little more com-

pactly, he bethought himself of the mistake he had made, and remembered that it is an essential condition to the 'acquisition of knowledge' from books of travel like Belzoni's, that there should be Belzonis to write them.

Neither, indeed, is there anything to indicate that the desires of young Alexander Burnes at that time turned towards a life of military adventure in the eastern or the western worlds. Of the hundreds of cadets who year after year went out to India at that time in the service of the East India Company, only an exceptional few were moved by any impulses of their own to enter the Indian army. The choice was commonly made for them as a matter of convenience by their parents or guardians; and the case of Alexander Burnes was no exception to the rule. The success of Mr Hume was that which decided the choice of the worthy burgess of Montrose, for it afforded at once a great encouragement and a material aid. The eldest hope of the Burnes family, James, was destined for the medical service—that service in which Mr Hume had so rapidly made a fortune—and was pursuing his studies in London, with a view to an Indian career. Adam, the second, was training for the law in his native burgh. And Alexander, by the assistance of Mr Hume, was to be provided with a cadetship, as soon as he was old enough to take up the appointment. When, therefore, the young student was within a few weeks from the completion of his sixteenth year, he was sent up to London in a Dundee smack; and having arrived there on the 14th of March, 1821, he was on the following day introduced by Mr Hume to Mr Stanley Clerk, a member of the Court of Directors, and was told

that his name had been duly entered for a cadetship of infantry on the establishment of Bombay. He spent two months in London, studying under the well-known Oriental professor, Dr Gilchrist, and watched over by Mr Joseph Hume, who gave him good advice of all kinds, and acted as his banker; and then on the 16th of May—his birthday—he attended at the India House and formally took the oath of allegiance.

It was a matter of pleasant family arrangement that the eldest brother, James Burnes, who had been appointed an assistant-surgeon on the Bombay establishment, should sail in the same vessel with Alexander; so they embarked together, early in June, on board the good ship *Sarah*. Of this voyage there are abundant records in the young cadet's journal, many passages of which exhibit considerable discernment of character, and no slight powers of description. But it must suffice here to state that, after an uneventful voyage, the *Sarah* arrived at her destination, and that, on the 21st of October, 1821, these two young Montrosians found themselves on the beach of Bombay, with very little money in their pockets, and with very slender interest; but with stout hearts, clear heads, and that determination to make for themselves careers in the public service which, in the days of the East India Company, carried so many members of our middle classes in India straight on to fortune and to fame.

The brothers were soon separated. On the 13th of November, James Burnes was gazetted to do duty as an assistant-surgeon with the Artillery at Maloongah. Four

days before this, Alexander's name had appeared in General Orders, by which he was posted to do duty with the 1st Battalion of the 3rd Regiment of Native Infantry at Bombay. On the 19th, he recorded in his journal, that he had 'commenced his military career,' and appeared on parade. From that day he made steady progress in his profession. He applied himself sedulously to the cultivation of the native languages. He had continued on board ship the studies which he had commenced under Dr Gilchrist in London, and now he supplemented his literary pursuits by making and steadily adhering to the rule, to converse with his native servants only in Hindostanee; and on the 8th of December he wrote in his journal: 'Ever since I ordered my servants to address me in Hindostanee I find my improvement very great, and I am persuaded that there is no method more effectual in acquiring the language than the one I am at present pursuing, for it unites the theoretical and the practical. Having migrated from my own country, and being rather of a curious and searching disposition, I have begun to gain as much information concerning the manners, customs, laws, and religions of this people—a study not only amusing and interesting, but highly instructive; for what is it that makes a man, but a knowledge of men and manners?' There was nothing which a man might not achieve in India, who thus set himself to work in the right way. There was proof of this even then before the young 'unposted ensign.' He had carried out with him, as most young men carry out, letters of introduction to the Governor and other influential people of the Presidency. The Governor at that time was Mr Mountstuart Elphinstone, whose

kindness and affability of manner won the heart of the young soldier at once. 'The Governor,' he wrote home to his family at Montrose, 'received us with great politeness, and invited us to the most splendid fête I had ever beheld, and did not behave in a "How do?" manner, but was extremely affable and polite, which, among a party of a hundred, and for the most part generals and great men, was a great deal. . . . A few weeks ago a grand public ball was given to Sir John Malcolm, on his leaving India,\* to which I had the honour of receiving an invitation; but where it came from I know not. It was, if anything, grander than Mr Elphinstone's fête, and held in a house built for the purpose, about the size of the old Council House at Montrose, illuminated with lamps from top to bottom.' There must have been something in all this greatly to inspire and encourage the young Scotch subaltern, for Malcolm himself had risen from the same small beginning, and now his name was in every man's mouth, and all were delighted to do him honour. What might not any young Scot, with the right stuff in him, do in India? In all directions there was encouragement and assurances not likely to be thrown away upon a youth of young Burnes's lively imagination. A Montrose man had sent him out to India; an Edinburgh man was now at the head of the Government of Bombay; a Glasgow man was Governor of the Madras Presidency; and now the son of an Eskdale farmer was receiving the plaudits of all classes of his countrymen, and returning for a while to his native land, a successful soldier and a successful statesman, amidst a whirl of popularity that

\* See *ante*, Memoir of Sir John Malcolm, vol. i. page 304.

might have fully satisfied the desires of the most ambitious hero in the world.

But to young Alexander Burnes the encouragements of the future were not greater than the consolations of the present. 'I like the country amazingly,' he wrote to Montrose, 'and as yet am not at all desirous of a return to my own land. Here I have everything to be wished for—plenty of time to myself, a gentlemanly commanding officer, and several very pleasant brother-officers.' But he added, for thoughts of home were still pulling at his heart, 'how dearly should I like to see little Charley or Cecilia trudging into my canvas abode—but, ah! that is far beyond probability. However, I may yet see Charley in India, for he seems a boy made for it.'

Thoughts of active service soon began to stir his mind. There was a prospect of a war with China, and the young soldier was eager to take part in it. 'There has been a most dreadful disturbance,' he wrote to his parents, on the 30th of April, 1822, 'between the powers of China and the East India Company within these few months; so all trade between these countries is now at a stop, and nothing seems more inevitable than war, for it is in everybody's mouth, and every person is anxious to go. I hope I may be sent. If I am not sent along with my regiment, I shall certainly volunteer; for if a man does not push on he will never see service, and, of course, will never be an officer worth anything. What will the poor old maids of Montrose do for want of tea?' But the excitement passed away. There was no war. And so young Alexander Burnes fell back peacefully on his Oriental studies, and with such good



success, that at the beginning of May, 1822, he went up for an examination in Hindostanee, and found that he passed for an interpretership. 'I was so delighted,' he wrote in his journal, 'that I could scarcely contain myself.' A fortnight before, he had been posted to the 2nd Battalion of the 11th Regiment of Native Infantry, but as the interpretership of that regiment was not vacant, he applied, without success, to be removed to another corps. Any disappointment, however, which he might have felt about this was soon removed by the necessities of action; for a few days afterwards his regiment was ordered to Poonah, which a few years before had been the capital of the Peishwah, and was still in the bloom of its historical associations. It was with no common interest that he repeatedly visited the battle-field of Khirkee. 'The plain where the cavalry of the Peishwah charged I galloped over,' he wrote in his journal, 'and I can scarcely imagine a better place for cavalry to act than this, for scarcely a nullah intersects it.' \*

The time passed very pleasantly at Poonah. 'It is a most delightful place,' he wrote, 'and I like the Deccan amazingly. I have joined the 2nd Battalion of the 11th Bombay Native Infantry, which in point of discipline is not surpassed by any regiment in the service. . . . In point of officers there was never, perhaps, a more gentlemanly and pleasant set of men assembled together in an Indian Native Corps—in a word, I have got into a regiment that delights me, and naturally makes my time pass delightfully. . . .' Governor Elphinstone was then at Poonah, contributing by his hospitalities to the general happiness, and stimulating

\* See *and*, Memoir of Mountstuart Elphinstone, vol. i.

the youth of the station, by his example, to deeds of heroic sportsmanship. Here young Burnes fleshed his maiden spear during a hog-hunt of three days' duration. Here, too, he began the study of the Persian language. 'I have been strenuously advised to begin Persian,' he wrote to his friends at Montrose, 'as it will improve my Hindostanee, and, perhaps, add greatly to my future prospects in India; so I have commenced it.' And he prosecuted the study with such good effect, that, after a few months, he was able to derive intense gratification from the perusal of the Persian poets. Before the end of the month of September he thus pleasantly reported his progress: 'My bedroom is small, and brings often to my recollection my old little closet in the passage, for as it is my study I spend a great deal of time in it, and have managed to scribble pieces of poetry on its walls also; but they are now of a different language, for I have got quite enamoured of Persian poetry, which is really, for sound and everything, like a beautiful song—instead of *Lallah Rookh* in the English, I have got a *Lallah Rookh* in the Persian—at least a much more beautiful poem.'

In December the regiment quitted Poonah *en route* for Surat. At Bombay, where they halted, Alexander Burnes again made a push for an interpretership, and this time with good success; for on the 7th of January, 1823, his name appeared in General Orders, gazetted as interpreter of the 1st Extra Battalion, which happened to be posted at Surat. He was, with one exception, the only ensign in the Bombay Army who held such an appointment. This was great promotion; but in the following year a brighter

prospect still expanded before the young soldier. On the general reorganization of the army, by which each battalion was converted into a separate regiment, with a separate regimental staff, Lieutenant Burnes, then little more than eighteen years old, was offered the regimental adjutancy. The offer excited him greatly, and he wrote : ' Behold your son Alexander the most fortunate man on earth for his years ! Behold him Lieutenant and Adjutant Burnes of the 21st Regiment, on an allowance of from five hundred to six hundred rupees a month.' The appointment had been offered to him by his friend Colonel Campbell. ' He did not think,' wrote Burnes to Montrose, ' that I would accept the situation, for my life in India has been so much devoted to study, that he conceived, and correctly too, that I was aiming at some political situation. I soon undeceived him, by telling him that I found my abilities greatly turned to that direction, but that, nevertheless, I was ready for anything else. . . . No man in his sound senses would refuse a situation of fifty or sixty guineas a month.'\* The breaking up of the old regiment was, however, a source of no little grief to him, and a like feeling prevailed among all the best officers in the army. ' I could little tolerate this,' said Burnes, ' for I had become in a great degree attached to the men ; but I less regretted it as my brother-officers were all to accompany me.' This re-organization gave a blow to the discipline of the whole army, from which it never recovered.

\* In this letter Alexander Burnes again urged his father to send out his brother Charles in the army, and undertook to guarantee the payment of all expenses.

From the journals which he kept in this year, a lively impression may be gained of the young soldier's state of mind. A conviction was growing upon him that, notwithstanding early backwardness, there was some good cultivable ground in his nature, and that some day he would make for himself a name. He had conceived a desire to visit other Eastern countries, and was assiduously studying their languages. Like many others at that dangerous period of dawning manhood, he was haunted with strange doubts concerning both his material and spiritual being, and fancied that he was doomed to die young and to lapse into unbelief. There are few earnest inquiring minds that have not been subjected to that early blight of scepticism. A few passages from his diary will illustrate all these mental and moral phases. 'July 24. . . . I find it frequently the case that dull, or rather middling, boys at school shine more in the world than those who are always at the head, and exquisite scholars. . . . I am the only illiterate man in my family—all professions but me. Never mind—quite content. A soldier's life permits of much spare time, which I am improving.' 'September 2. I reckon three years more will make me a Persian scholar, and five more will give me a tolerable knowledge of Arabic. Before many more months elapse, I purpose making a visit to Persia, and, if possible, Arabia; that is to say, if my circumstances will allow, as I feel confident of remaining amongst the inferior class of linguists if I do not go to the country.' 'September 3. I have been ruminating on the probability of accomplishing the above project, and if I continue saving 50 rupees a month, as I do at present, I may in time ac-

cumulate something ; but it is so expensive studying, that that keeps me from saving what I ought. . . . I expect to reach the height of preferment in this service, and only think my short life will hinder me from it.' 'September 4. . . . If a speedy return to my native land (say ten years) be not effected, I can entertain little hopes of living to an aged man. In constitution I may be robust, in body I am very weak, slender, and ill made, and if it be true, as I have often heard them say, " I was born before my time." This they tell me, and as my grandfather's house was the place of my birth, I begin to think so. If this is the case, it accounts for my shape. I was very small when born, and, indeed, so much so, that they baptized me three days after my birth, that I might not die nameless, which, according to superstitious people, is bad. I am different from all around me. I dislike all gymnastic and athletic exercises. I like *argument* much—a *jolly* party only now and then ; much study, and am very partial to history, but dislike novels extremely, even Scott's. My abilities are confined, but as my mind expands they seem to improve. I was very dull at school, and reckoned a *dolt*. I ought not to have been a soldier, although I glory in the profession, for I am too fond of pen and ink. 'September 21. I have of late been deeply pondering in my own mind the strange opinions I begin to imbibe about religion, and which grow stronger every day. . . . Would to God my mind were settled on this truly important subject ! Could I be convinced fully of it, I would not believe in a future state, but it is an improbable thing to imagine God has made man gifted with reason, after his own image

and yet to perish. It is madness to dream of it. My ideas may be very barbarous, but I do not see that a man's happiness can be increased by his knowing there is a tribunal. . . . I lead a happy life, much more so than the generality of my companions, but I entertain different ideas of religion daily, and am afraid they will end in my having no religion at all. A fatalist I am, but no atheist. No, nor even a deist. No—what shall I call it?—a sceptical blockhead, whose head, filled with its own vanities, imagines itself more capable than it is.' 'October 16. My second year in India being now on the eve of completion, I think it full time to remit money to my father in Europe; consequently sent a hoondie to Bombay for 246 rupees to Messrs R. and Co., which, with former remittances, makes up a sum somewhat short of £50. This I have desired to be transmitted home to my father directly, or to J. Hume, Esq., M.P., for him. . . . I am thinking within myself how very gratifying this will be to my father, who could not certainly expect much from me, and particularly at present, when I am on reduced allowances.'

The power of gratifying this laudable desire to remit money to his family in England was well-nigh checked at the outset by what might have been a serious misadventure, for which he would have long reproached himself. In those days there was still a good deal of gambling in the army, and in a luckless hour young Burnes was induced to play at hazard. He thus records the incident in his journal: 'October 17. "I have lost a day." This day my feelings were put more to the test than any other day during my existence. G. and H. called in upon me in the morning,

and as we are all very fond of cards, it was proposed by G. to play at hazard. I declined, on the plea, first, of its being daytime; and secondly, on its being too much of a gambling game for me. The first I gave up, being master of the house, and in the second I yielded, provided the stakes were low. A quarter of a rupee was proposed, and we got on very well for some time, till G., beginning to lose, went very high. This induced me also. I lost 1500 rupees, and it was on the increase every turn up of the cards. It was proposed at this time (it being past the dinner-hour) to give up after our rounds. H. and G. played, and I reduced it to about 800 rupees. My turn came, and I lost. I was upwards of 1000 rupees in arrear. G. proposed once more. I agreed. I gained from H. and G., and when it came to my turn I owed 500 rupees. I dealt out the cards. G. gave me a card, and went 50 rupees on ten cards at table, and lost 350 rupees. The upshot of the game was, that Burnes regained his money, and found himself with a balance of 13 rupees in his favour. But he had won much more than this. 'I have got such a moral lesson,' he added, 'that I never intend handling cards at a round game for some time, and I am ashamed of myself, and shall ever be so. "I've lost a day." I could scarcely place the cards on the table, I got so nervous. No wonder. I had at that time lost my pay for half a year. Had I lost 1500 rupees, where would my prospects of sending money to my dear father have been? What is more than all, these gamblings derange my head and prevent me bestowing proper attention on my Persian studies.'

He gambled no more after this, but continued to apply

himself steadily to the study of the native languages and to his military duties; and he soon made rapid progress in his profession. In 1825 there were threatenings of war with the Ameers of Sindh. There had been a repetition of those border forays which might have resulted in the devastation of Cutch, and a British force was equipped for the coercion of the marauders. To this force Alexander Burnes was attached as Persian interpreter, and he was afterwards appointed to the Quartermaster-General's department, which permanently removed him from the sphere of regimental duty. Writing from Bhooj to his early friend and patron, Joseph Hume, in July, 1825, he gave the following account of his condition and prospects: \* 'You must yourself be well acquainted with the present state of India to the eastward, and I can give you no more favourable accounts regarding the Bombay Presidency, as a

\* This letter was written primarily to acknowledge the receipt of a letter of introduction to Sir David Ochterlony, which Mr Hume had sent to the writer. As illustrative of a passage at p. 593, vol. i. (Memoir of Sir Charles Metcalfe), the following may, perhaps, be read with interest: 'I had the pleasure to receive your letter of August, 1824, enclosing one to Sir David Ochterlony, and beg leave to express my sincere thanks for the interest you have taken in my behalf. I took the earliest opportunity to forward it to the General, but his unfortunate quarrel with the Government regarding the propriety of reducing Bhurtpore has given him enough to do, and fully accounts for no answer being received. Sir David is much regretted, and it seems to be the general opinion that it was a very impolitic measure to abandon the campaign when so overwhelming an army was encamped before the fort. Our misfortunes in 1805, when under the walls of Bhurtpore, are still fresh in the recollection of the natives, and this has given them, if possible, additional presumption.'



cessation of hostilities at Burmah can only be the signal for a declaration of war with the Ameers of Sindh, our north-western neighbours. I can, perhaps, inform you of some particulars which may prove interesting regarding this and the adjacent province of India. About four or five years ago the nobles of Cutch called in the British Government to assist them in deposing their Rao (King), who had rendered himself very odious by the most wanton cruelty. Their request met with the approbation of our Government; the Rao was deposed, and his son raised to the musnud, with a Regency of five persons, of which the British Resident is one. A subsidiary force of two regiments was established, and the Cutch Durbar agreed to pay half. In April, 1825, a body of marauders invaded the province from Sindh, but they were not entirely natives of that country, many of the discontented of this province having joined them. Be it sufficient to say that there was little or no doubt of their having received great support from Sindh. They plundered the whole of the country around Bhooj, and, from the insufficiency of our force, actually cut up six hundred of the Rao's horse within four miles of camp. There being little doubt but that Sindh was at the bottom of it, some time elapsed before any attempt was made to dislodge them, it being considered prudent to wait the arrival of troops. Another native regiment and some regular cavalry have been added to the brigade; and Captain Pottinger, the Resident, has just told me that a letter has arrived from our agent at Hyderabad mentioning the march of a division of the Sindhian army, chiefly composed of Beloochees, and amounting to four or

five thousand men, and every hour confirms the report. A third treaty with this nation may be patched up, but a war is inevitable ere long, and the want of officers and troops will be the cause of much expense to the Company. . . . I am proud to say that the same good fortune which I had at the commencement of my career seems still to attend me, and that the late disturbances in Cutch have elevated me from the regimental to the general Staff, having been appointed Quartermaster of Brigade to the Cutch Field Force. If you were to inquire of me how this has come about, I could not tell you, for I hardly know myself. The Brigadier of the station (Colonel Dyson) sent for me while I was acting Adjutant in April last, and asked me if I would become his interpreter and Staff, vacating my own acting appointment under the hope of Government confirming his nomination. As I was only an Acting Adjutant, I consented, and fortunately I am confirmed in one of the appointments, which makes my pay and allowances 400 rupees a month. I should have liked the interpretership, but as the Staff is 400 rupees alone, I am very fortunate, and have every probability of retaining the situation for a long time, although it is only styled a temporary arrangement. If Sindh is invaded, an officer in the Quartermaster-General's department has a grand field opened to him. My pecuniary concerns are thus in a very thriving way. I have already sent home £250, and have more at my command. I am £500 better off than any of my shipmates, whose letters of credit were in general five times the amount of mine, but then I have been very fortunate. I am not indebted in any way to the Governor, and the

Commander-in-Chief has deprived me of both Quarter-mastership and Adjutancy, when recommended both times by the Commanding Officer, and the latter time by a Lieutenant-Colonel even. I must confess that chance must have done much for me against such opposition, but I am also greatly indebted to Colonel Leighton, who has always stood by me.'

In a later letter the story is thus resumed: 'I continued my study of the languages,' he wrote to an old schoolfellow in the West Indies, 'and mastered the Persian, which brought me to the notice of Government, and I was selected from the army to be Persian interpreter to a field force of eight thousand men, under orders to cross the Indus and attack the territory of Sindh, which is situated at the delta of that great river. . . . The force to which I was attached did not advance; the campaign terminated in 1825; but during its continuance I had, in the absence of other duty, devoted my time to surveying and geography, and produced a map of an unknown track, for which Government rewarded me by an appointment to the department of the Quartermaster-General—the most enviable line in the service. It removed me for good and all, before I had been four years in the service, from every sort of regimental duty. I advanced in this department step by step, and was honoured by the approbation of my superiors. In 1828 they raised me to be Assistant-Quartermaster-General of the Army, and transferred me to headquarters at Bombay, on a salary of eight hundred rupees a month. There I met Sir John Malcolm, of whom you may have heard. I knew him not, but I volunteered to

explore the Indus from where it is joined by the Punjab down to the ocean, and thus delighted the men in authority. I started at the end of 1829 on this hazardous undertaking, and after I had got half through it, was recalled by Lord Bentinck, as it would have involved political difficulties at the moment. I did, however, so much, that I blush to sound my own praises. The substantial part of them is, that they have removed me entirely to the diplomatic line, as assistant to the Resident in Cutch, which is a foreign state, in alliance with the British, close on the Indus. It is difficult to draw a parallel between European and Indian situations; but, if one is to be made, I am what is called Secretary of Legation, and on the high road, though I say it myself, to office, emolument, and honour. I have now briefly sketched out my career. My pursuits are purely literary, and confined to investigating the antiquities of Asia and the wonders of this people. I have been tracing the magnanimous Alexander on his Quixotic journey to these lands; and I shall set out at the end of 1830 to traverse further regions, which have been untrodden since the Greeks of Macedon followed their leader. Being an accredited agent of the Government, I have their support in all these wanderings; so you see that I have hung the sword in the hall, and entered the Cabinet as a civilian. . . . My great ambition,' he said, 'is to travel. I am laying by a few spare rupees to feed my innocent wishes, and could I but have a companion like you, how doubly joyous would I roam among the ruins of the capitol, the relics of classic Athens, and the sombre grandeur of Egypt! These, and all the countries near them, are in

my mind's eye; I think, I dream of them; and when I journey to my native land, my route will traverse them all. I purpose landing at Berenice on the Red Sea, and, following the Nile in its course across from classic to sacred lands, cross the plains of Syria and Mount Sinai; thence, by Asia Minor to the Hellespont and Greece, Italy, and merry France; and last of all to my native Scotia. I have enough of the good things of this life to start on this projected tour, when my ten years of service are out—that is, on the 31st of October, 1831.'

But it was ordained by Providence that his journeyings should be quite in a different direction. In the early part of 1830, a despatch arrived at Bombay, from the Board of Control, enclosing a letter of compliment from the President, Lord Ellenborough, to Runjeet Singh, the great ruler of the Punjab, together with a batch of horses that were to be forwarded to his Highness as a present from the King of England. It was necessary that the letter and the horses should be forwarded to Lahore, under the charge of a British officer. Sir John Malcolm was at this time Governor of Bombay. He was full of enterprise and enthusiasm; he had himself been a great traveller; and he was the one of all others to appreciate the achievements and to sympathize with the aspirations of such a man as Alexander Burnes. He accordingly recommended the young Bombay Lieutenant for this important duty, and the Supreme Government readily endorsed the recommendation. But although the man had been chosen, and chosen wisely, there was much discussion respecting the manner of the mission and its accompaniments, and very considerable official delay.

'It is part of Sir John Malcolm's plan for the prosecution of my journey,' wrote Burnes to the family at Montrose, in September, 1830, 'that I quit Bombay before the Government make any arrangements for my voyage up the Indus to Lahore.' In these days we know every foot of the ground, and such a journey as Burnes was about to undertake belongs only to the regions of common-place; but when Burnes, at this time, wrote about 'the noble prospects which awaited him in being selected for a delicate and hazardous duty,' he by no means exaggerated the fact. He was emphatically the Pioneer, and he had to cut and clear his way through briary difficulties and obstructions which have long since disappeared. He was not merely sent upon a complimentary mission to the ruler of the Punjab; he was directed also to explore the countries on the Lower Indus, and to this end he was intrusted with presents to the Ameers of Sindh.\*

\* If I were writing history, not biography, I should comment upon the error of this. As it is, I cannot resist quoting the following from a minute of Sir Charles Metcalfe, recorded in October, 1830: 'The scheme of surveying the Indus, under the pretence of sending a present to Runjeet Singh, seems to me highly objectionable. It is a trick, in my opinion, unworthy of our Government, which cannot fail, when detected, as most probably it will be, to excite the jealousy and indignation of the powers on whom we play it. It is just such a trick as we are often falsely suspected and accused of by the native Princes of India, and this confirmation of their suspicions, generally unjust, will do more injury, by furnishing the ground of merited reproach, than any advantage to be gained by the measure can compensate. It is not impossible that it may lead to war. I hope that so unnecessary and ruinous a calamity may not befall us. Yet, as our officers, in the prosecution of their clandestine pursuits, may meet with insult or ill treatment, which we may choose to resent, that result is possible, however much to be deprecated.' The sagacity

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But the Ameers were mistrustful of our designs. They believed that Burnes had come to spy the nakedness of the land. With all the clearness of prophecy, they saw that for the English to explore their country, was some day for them to take it. So they threw all sorts of impediments in the way of Burnes's advance. 'We quitted Cutch,' he wrote to Sir John Malcolm, 'on the 20th of January, 1831, and encountered every imaginable difficulty and opposition from the Ameers of Sindh. They first drove us forcibly out of the country. On a second attempt they starved us out. But I was not even then prepared to give up hopes, and I ultimately gained the objects of pursuit by protracted negotiations, and voyaged safely and successfully to Lahore.' After he had once entered the Punjab, his journey, indeed, was quite an ovation. 'My reception in this country,' he wrote to his mother, on the last day of July, 'has been such as was to be expected from a Prince who has had so high an honour conferred on him as to receive presents from our gracious Sovereign. Immediately that I reached his frontier he sent a guard of horsemen as an honorary escort, and announced my arrival by a salute of eleven guns from the walls of the fortresses I passed. But what is this to the chief of Bahwulpore, lower down, who came all the way to Cutch to meet me, and with whom I had an interview, announced by eighty guns?' The mission, which had reached Lahore on the 18th of July, quitted it on the 14th of August; and Burnes pro-

of this is undeniable; but it is to be observed that Burnes was in no degree responsible for the policy here denounced. He had only to execute the order of the Government.

ceeded to Simlah, to give an account of his embassy in person to the Governor-General, who was then, with his secretaries, residing in that pleasant and salubrious retreat.

Lord William Bentinck received the young traveller with characteristic kindness, and listened with the deepest interest to the account of his adventures. He listened to the account, not only of what the young Bomhay Lieutenant had done, but also of what he desired to do. Before he had started on this journey, Burnes had cherished in his heart the project of a still grander exploration—the exploration which was eventually to achieve for him fame and fortune. ‘I have a vast ambition,’ he wrote from the banks of the Jheelum to the ‘old folks at home,’ ‘to cross the Indus and Indian Caucasus, and pass by the route of Balkh, Bokhara, and Samarcand, to the Aral and Caspian Seas, to Persia, and thence to return by sea to Bombay. All this depends upon circumstances; but I suspect that the magnates of this empire will wish to have the results of my present journey before I embark upon another.’ He was right. But, having communicated the results of this journey, he found the Cabinet at Simlah well prepared to encourage another enterprise of the same character, on a grander scale. ‘The Home Government,’ he wrote to his sister, on the 23rd of September, 1831, ‘have got frightened at the designs of Russia, and desired that some intelligent officer should be sent to acquire information in the countries bordering on the Oxus and the Caspian; and I, knowing nothing of all this, come forward and volunteer precisely for what they want. Lord Bentinck jumps at it, invites me to come and talk personally, and gives me com-

fort in a letter.' 'I quit Loodhianah,' he said, a few weeks later, 'on the 1st of January, 1832, and proceed by Lahore to Attock, Caubul, Bameean, Balkh, Bokhara, and Khiva, to the Caspian Sea, and from thence to Astracan. If I can but conceal my designs from the officers of the Russian Government, I shall pass through their territory to England, and visit my paternal roof in the Bow Butts.'

After a few more weeks of pleasant sojourning with the vice-regal court, Alexander Burnes started on his long and hazardous journey. He received his passports at Delhi two days before Christmas, and on the 3rd of January, 1832, crossed the British frontiers, and shook off Western civilization. He was accompanied by a young assistant-surgeon, named Gerard, who had already earned for himself a name by his explorations of the Himalayahs, and by two native attachés,—the one, Mahomed Ali, in the capacity of a surveyor; the other, a young Cashmeree Mahomedan, educated at Delhi, named Mohun Lal, who accompanied him as moonshee, or secretary. Traversing again the country of the 'five rivers,' and making divers pleasant and profitable explorations 'in the footsteps of Alexander the Great,' in the middle of March the travellers forded the Indus, near Attock, took leave of their Sikh friends, and became guests of the Afghans. There were at that time no jealousies, no resentments, between the two nations. The little knowledge that they had of us, derived from the fast-fading recollections of Mr Elphinstone's mission, was all in our favour; and we in our turn believed

them to be a cheerful, simple-minded, kind-hearted, hospitable people. Along the whole line of country, from Peshawur to Caubul, which cannot now be even named amongst us without a shudder, the English travellers were welcomed as friends. From the Afghan capital, Burnes wrote on the 10th of May, 1832, to his mother: 'My journey has been more prosperous than my most sanguine expectations could have anticipated; and, instead of jealousy and suspicion, we have hitherto been caressed and feasted by the chiefs of the country. I thought Peshawur a delightful place, till I came to Caubul: truly this is a Paradise.' His fine animal spirits rose beneath the genial influences of the buoyant bracing climate of Afghanistan. How happy he was at this time—how full of heart and hope—may be gathered from such of his letters as reached his friends. With what a fine gush of youthful enthusiasm, writing to the family at Montrose, to which his heart, untravelled, was ever fondly turning, he describes his travel-life on this new scene of adventure. ' . . . We travel from hence in ten days with a caravan, and shall reach Bokhara by the first of July. . . . If the road from Bokhara to the Caspian is interrupted by war, of which there is a chance, I shall be obliged to pass into Persia, and in that event must bid farewell to the hope of seeing you, as I must return to India. The countries north of the Oxus are at present in a tranquil state, and I do not despair of reaching Istamboul in safety. They may seize me and sell me for a slave, but no one will attack me for my riches. Never was there a more humble being seen. I have no tent, no chair or table, no bed, and my clothes altogether

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amount to the value of one pound sterling. You would disown your son if you saw him. My dress is purely Asiatic, and since I came into Caubul has been changed to that of the lowest orders of the people. My head is shaved of its brown locks, and my beard, dyed black, grieves—as the Persian poets have it—for the departed beauty of youth. I now eat my meals with my hands, and greasy digits they are, though I must say, in justification, that I wash before and after meals. . . . I frequently sleep under a tree, but if a villager will take compassion upon me I enter his house. I never conceal that I am a European, and I have as yet found the character advantageous to my comfort. I might assume all the habits and religion of the Mahomedans, since I can now speak Persian as my own language, but I should have less liberty and less enjoyment in an assumed garb. The people know me by the name of Sekundur, which is the Persian for Alexander, and a magnanimous name it is. With all my assumed poverty, I have a bag of ducats round my waist, and bills for as much money as I choose to draw. I gird my loins, and tie on my sword on all occasions, though I freely admit I would make more use of silver and gold than of cold steel. When I go into a company, I put my hand on my heart and say with all humility to the master of the house, “Peace be unto thee,” according to custom, and then I squat myself down on the ground. This familiarity has given me an insight into the character of the people which I never otherwise could have acquired. I tell them about steam-engines, armies, ships, medicine, and all the wonders of Europe, and, in return, they enlighten me regarding the customs of their country, its

history, state factions, trade, &c., I all the time appearing indifferent and conversing thereon "pour passer le temps." . . . The people of this country are kind-hearted and hospitable; they have no prejudices against a Christian, and none against our nation. When they ask me if I eat pork, I of course shudder, and say that it is only outcasts who commit such outrages. God forgive me! for I am very fond of bacon, and my mouth waters as I write the word. I wish I had some of it for breakfast, to which I am now about to sit down. At present I am living with a most amiable man, a Newab, named Jubbur Khan, brother to the chief of Caubul, and he feeds me and my companion daily. They understand *gastronomy* pretty well. Our breakfast consists of pillaw (rice and meat), vegetables, stews, and preserves, and finishes with fruit, of which there is yet abundance, though it is ten months' old. Apples, pears, quinces, and even *melons* are preserved, and as for the grapes, they are delicious. They are kept in small boxes in cotton, and are preserved throughout the year. Our fare, you see, is not so bad as our garb, and like a holy friar, we have sackcloth outside, but better things to line the inside. We have, however, no *sack* or good wine, for I am too much of a politician to drink wine in a Mahomedan country. . . . I am well mounted on a good horse, in case I should find it necessary to take to my heels. My whole baggage on earth goes on my mule, over which my servant sits supercargo; and with all this long enumeration of my condition, and the entire sacrifice of all the comforts of civilized life, I never was in better spirits, and never less under the influence of *ennui*. . . . I cannot tell you how ~~my~~ heart

leaps, to see all the trees and plants of my native land growing around me in this country.'

When Burnes and his companions quitted Caubul, the Newab Jubbur Khan, who had hospitably entertained them, and had endeavoured to persuade them to protract their sojourn with him, made every possible arrangement for the continuance of their journey in safety and comfort, and bade them 'God speed' with a heavy heart. 'I do not think,' said Burnes, 'I ever took leave of an Asiatic with more regret than I left this worthy man. He seemed to live for every one but himself.' He was known afterwards among our people by the name of 'the Good Newab;' and the humanity of his nature was conspicuous to the last.

Having quitted Caubul, the English travellers made their way to the foot of the Hindoo-Koosh, or Indian Caucasus, and traversed that stupendous mountain-range to Koondooz, Kooloom, and Balkh. This was the route explored by those unfortunate travellers Moorcroft and Trebeck, of whom Burnes now found many traces, and whose sad history he was enabled to verify and authenticate. It was a relief to the young Englishman to find himself in the territory of the King of Bokhara, whose evil reputation had not been then established. 'As we were now in the territories of a king,' he naïvely recorded in the history of his journey, 'we could tell him our opinions, though it had, perhaps, been more prudent to keep them to ourselves.'

After a sojourn of three days at Balkh, which had many interesting and some painful associations, for it had been the capital of the ancient Bactrian kingdom, and a little way

beyond its walls was the grave of Moorcroft, Burnes and his companions made their way to the city of Bokhara, which they reached on the 27th of June. There they resided for a space of nearly four weeks, receiving from the Vizier all possible kindness and hospitality. 'Sekundur,' said he to Burnes on his departure, 'I have sent for you to ask if any one has molested you in this city, or taken money from you in my name, and if you leave us contented?' I replied that we had been treated as honoured guests, that our luggage had not even been opened, nor our property taxed, and that I should ever remember with the deepest sense of gratitude the many kindnesses that had been shown to us in the holy Bokhara. . . . I quitted this worthy man with a full heart, and with sincere wishes (which I still feel) for the prosperity of this country.' The Vizier gave authoritative instructions to the conductors of the caravan with which Burnes was to travel, and to a Toorkoman chief who was to accompany it with an escort, to guard the lives and properties of the Feringhees, declaring that he would root them from the face of the earth if any accident should befall the travellers; and the King of Bokhara gave them also a firman of protection bearing the royal seal. It is instructive to consider all this with the light of after-events to help us to a right understanding of its significance.

From Bokhara the route of the travellers lay across the great Toorkoman desert to Merv and Meshed, thence to Astrabad and the shores of the Caspian; thence to Teheran, the capital of the dominions of the Shah of Persia, from which point Burnes moved down to the Persian Gulf, took



ship there to Bombay, and afterwards proceeded to Calcutta. The story has been told by himself, with an abundance of pleasant detail, and is too well known to need to be repeated. Summing up the whole, he says of it, in a few striking words, 'I saw everything, both ancient and modern, to excite the interest and inflame the imagination—Bactria, Trans-Oxiana, Scythia, and Parthia, Kharasm, Khorasan, and Iran. We had now visited all these countries; we had retraced the greater part of the route of the Macedonians; trodden the kingdoms of Porus and Taxiles, sailed on the Hydaspes, crossed the Indian Caucasus, and resided in the celebrated city of Balkh, from which Greek monarchs, far removed from the academies of Corinth and Athens, had once disseminated among mankind a knowledge of the arts and sciences of their own history, and the world. We had beheld the scenes of Alexander's wars, of the rude and savage inroads of Jengis and Timour, as well as of the campaigns and revelries of Baber, as given in the delightful and glowing language of his commentaries. In the journey to the coast, we had marched on the very line of route by which Alexander had pursued Darius, while the voyage to India took us on the coast of Mekran, and the track of the Admiral Nearchus.'

At Calcutta, Alexander Burnes laid before the Governor-General an account of his journey, accompanying it with much grave discourse on the policy which it was expedient for the British Government to pursue towards the different states which he had visited. The result was exactly what he wished. He was sent home to communicate to the authorities in England the information which he had ob-

tained. All this was truly delightful. Never in the midst of his wanderings in strange places, and among a strange people, had he forgotten the old home in Montrose, and the familiar faces of the household there; never had his heart ceased to yearn for the renewal in the flesh of those dear old family associations. He liked India; he loved his work, he gloried in the career before him; but the good home-feeling was ever fresh in his heart, and he was continually thinking of what was said and thought in Montrose. And in most of our Indian heroes this good home-feeling was kept alive to the last. It was not weariness of India; it was not a hankering after England. It was simply a good healthy desire to revisit the scenes of one's youth, to see again the faces of one's kindred, and then, strengthened and refreshed, to return with better heart for one's work.

On the 4th of November, 1833, Burnes landed at Dartmouth, and wrote thence to his mother that he could scarcely contain himself for joy. On the 6th he was in London, with his brothers, David and Charles; dining in the evening with the Court of Directors, who had opportunely one of their banquets at the London Tavern. Before the week was out, he was in a whirl of social excitement; he was fast becoming a lion—only waiting, indeed, for the commencement of the London season, to be installed as one of the first magnitude. 'I have been inundated by visits,' he wrote to his mother, 'from authors, publishers, societies, and what not. I am requested to be at the Geo-

graphical Society this evening, but I defer it for a fortnight, when I am to have a night to myself. . . . All, all are kind to me. I am a perfect wild beast.—“There’s the traveller,” “There’s Mr Burnes,” “There’s the Indus Burnes,” and what not do I hear. I wish I could hear you and my father, and I would despise all other compliments.’ ‘I am killed with honours and kindness,’ he said, in another letter, ‘and it is a more painful death than starvation among the Usbeks.’ In all this there was no exaggeration. The magnates of the land were contending for the privilege of a little conversation with ‘Bokhara Burnes.’ Lord Holland was eager to catch him for Holland House. Lord Lansdowne was bent upon carrying him off to Bowood. Charles Grant, the President of the Board of Control, sent him to the Prime Minister, Lord Grey, who had long confidential conferences with him; and, to crown all, the King—William the Fourth—commanded the presence of the Bombay Lieutenant at the Brighton Pavilion, and listened to the story of his travels and the exposition of his views for nearly an hour and a half.

The account of the interview, as recorded in his journal, is interesting and amusing: ‘Well, I have been an hour and twenty minutes with William the Fourth, and eventful ones they have been. It is not likely that I shall have many interviews with royalty, so I may be prolix in this, the first one. From the Castle Square gate I was taken to Lord Frederic Fitzclarence, who led me to the Chinese Hall, where I sat for twenty minutes till the King transacted his business with Sir Herbert Taylor. “Take a book,” said Lord Frederic, “from the shelf and amuse yourself;” and

one of the first I pulled down, was—what? “Burnes’ Justice.” This was ludicrous—was it but justice that I should see the King, or what? “Mr Burnes,” cried a page. I passed through two rooms; a large hall was thrown open, and I stood, hat in hand, in the presence of King William. “How do you do, Mr Burnes? I am most glad to see you; come and sit down—take a chair—there, sit down, take a chair.” The King stood but I sat, as compliance is politeness. There was no bending of knees, no kissing of hand, no ceremony; I went dressed as to a private gentleman. I expected to find a jolly-looking, laughing man, instead of which, William looks grave, old, careworn, and tired. His Majesty immediately began on my travels, and, desiring me to wheel round a table for him, he pulled his chair and sat down by mine. Hereon I pulled out a map, and said that I hoped his Majesty would permit me to offer the explanation on it. I began, and got along most fluently. I told him of the difficulties in Sindh, the reception by Runjeet, &c., but William the Fourth was all for politics, so I talked of the designs of Russia, her treaties, intrigues, agencies, ambassadors, commerce, &c., the facilities, the obstacles regarding the advance of armies—I flew from Lahore to Caubul, from Caubul to Bokhara and the Caspian, and I answered a hundred questions to his Majesty. The King then got up, took me to a large map, and made me go over all a second time, and turning round to me, asked a great deal about me personally. “Where were you educated?” “In Scotland, Sir.” “What is your age?” “Twenty-eight, please your Majesty.” “Only twenty-eight! What rank do you hold?” I replied, that I was only a Lieutenant

in the Army, but that my situation was political. "Oh, that I know. Really, sir," commenced the King, "you are a wonderful man; you have done more for me in this hour than any one has ever been able to do; you have pointed out everything to me. I now see why Lord William Bentinck places confidence in you; I had heard that you were an able man, but now I know you are most able. I trust in God that your life may be spared, that our Eastern Empire may benefit by the talents and abilities which you possess. You are intrusted with fearful information: you must take care what you publish. My ministers have been speaking of you to me, in particular Lord Grey. You will tell his Lordship and Mr Grant all the conversation you have had with me, and you will tell them what I think upon the ambition of Russia. . . . I think, sir, that your suggestions and those of Lord William Bentinck are most profound; you will tell Lord William, when you return to India, of my great gratification at having met so intelligent a person as yourself, and my satisfaction at his Lordship's having brought these matters before the Cabinet. Lord Grey thinks as I do, that you have come home on a mission of primary importance—second only to the politics of Russia and Constantinople. . . . Lord Grey tells me that you have convinced him that our position in Russia is hopeless." So continued King William. I felt quite overcome with his compliments. He then made me run over my *early services*, wondered only I was not a *Lieutenant-Colonel* if I had been an *Assistant-Quartermaster-General* added that he saw sufficient reason for employing a man of my talents in the highest situation, and again hoped that I

might be spared for my country's good. I replied to the King that I considered it a high honour to have had such confidential communication with his Majesty. He stopped me, and said that "I have been quite unreserved, for I see and know you deserve it. I could say many things to you," &c. &c. I have no more time to write. The King wore a blue coat with the ribbon of the Garter, and a narrow red ribbon round his neck, to which a cross was suspended. "Good morning, sir; I am truly happy to have seen you. You don't go to India yet," &c. &c. I took my departure, and, while threading the passages, a page ran after me by desire of the King, to show me the Palace; but I had seen it.'

He was now hard at work upon his book. He had written many lengthy and valuable official reports; but he had little experience of literary composition for a larger public than that of a bureaucracy, and he was wise enough to discern that the path to popular favour must be very cautiously trodden. Mistrusting his own critical judgment, he submitted portions of his work, before publication, to some more experienced friends, among whom were Mr James Baillie Fraser and Mr Mountstuart Elphinstone. The latter, not oblivious of his own early throes of literary labour, read the manuscript—painfully, in one sense, owing to the failure of his sight, but with the greatest interest and delight. 'I never read anything,' he wrote from his chambers in the Albany to Alexander Burnes, 'with more interest and pleasure; and although I cannot expect that every reader will be as much delighted as I have been, yet I shall have a bad opinion of the people's taste if the narrative is not received

with general favour.' But although Mr Elphinstone bestowed these general praises on the work, he was fain to do his young friend good service by honestly criticizing the work in detail. 'I have made my remarks,' he wrote, 'with the utmost freedom, and the more so, because I hope you will not pay any attention to them when unsupported, but will be guided by the opinion of people who know the taste of this town, and who are familiar with criticism in general literature. I must premise that many of my objections are founded on general principles, and may, therefore, often be brought against passages which in themselves may be beautiful, but which lack the general effect to which you ought always to look. The first of these principles is that a narrative of this kind should be in the highest degree plain and simple.' The reader who has perused the preceding Memoir of Mr Elphinstone, may remember how, in the preparation of his own book of travels, he had steadfastly adhered to this critical tenet; but whether naturally, or against nature, I do not undertake to say. My own impression is that he had brought his native instincts and appetencies to this state of critical subjection after sore trial and hard conflict, and that he spoke with the authority of a man who had wrestled down some besetting temptations. For naturally he was ardent, enthusiastic, imaginative; and when he first began to write for the public, he might have given way to the exuberance which he afterwards deprecated, if it had not been for the pruning-knife of his friend Richard Jenkins. Critically, he was doubtless right; but when he continued thus to enlarge upon the paramount duty of simplicity, perhaps he did not sufficiently remember that

fastidious public’ may be a small one. ‘To gain the confidence and good will of his reader,’ he said, ‘a traveller must be perfectly unaffected and unpretending. His whole object must seem to be to state what he has seen in the countries he has visited, without claiming the smallest superiority over his reader in any other description of knowledge or observation. For this reason, every unusual word, every fine sentiment, every general reflection, and every sign of an ambitious style, should be carefully excluded.’ A hard lesson this for a young writer; and there was much more of the same kind; sound and excellent advice, altogether past dispute, and in accordance with the best critical canons. But Mr Elphinstone lived to see these severe literary doctrines utterly set at nought by a younger race of writers—lived to see a ‘fastidious public’ take to its heart *Eothen*, as the most popular book of travels ever published in modern times.

Nor was the only pruning-knife applied to the exuberance of the young writer that which was wielded by the experienced hand of such chastened writers as Mr Elphinstone, the official knife was also applied to the manuscript in the Secret Department of the India House. This was, doubtless, in a literary sense, disadvantageous to the book; but, after undergoing these ordeals, it came out under the auspices of Mr Murray; and Burnes had the honour of presenting a copy to the King at one of his Majesty’s levees. ‘I know all about this,’ said the good natured monarch, mindful of Burnes’s visit to him at Brighton. The book was an undoubted success. It was well received by the critics and by the public, for not only was there something



geographically new in it, but something also politically suggestive. The Russo-phobia was gaining ground in England. There were many who believed that the time was fast approaching when the Sepoy and the Cossack would meet, face to face, some where in Central Asia. It was a great thing, therefore, just in that momentous epoch, that some one should appear amongst us to whom the countries lying between the Indus and the Caspian were something more than places on the map. As the depository of so much serviceable information, Burnes was sure to be welcome everywhere. There was much, too, in the man himself to increase the interest which his knowledge of these strange countries excited. He was young in years, but younger still in appearance and in manner. When he said that he had been thirteen or fourteen years in India, Lord Munster said to him, 'Why, that must have been nearly all your life.' There was a charming freshness and naïveté about him—the reflection, it may be said, of a warm, true heart, in which the home affections had never for a moment been dormant. The greatest happiness which his success gave him was derived from the thought that it would give pleasure to his family, and might enable him to help them. He had striven in vain, and his father had striven also, through Sir John Malcolm and others, to obtain a cadetship for his brother Charles; but now this great object was readily obtainable, and the young man, who had been waiting so long for this promotion, received, as a just tribute to his brother, an appointment in the Bombay Army, which others' influence had failed to procure for him.

He remained at home until the spring of 1835; and

then, with mingled feelings of hope and regret, he set his face again towards the East.\* His sojourn in England had been attended by so many gratifying and flattering circumstances, that to one of his impressionable nature it must have been a continual delight from the first day to the last. Among other honours bestowed on him of which I have not spoken, it may be recorded here that he received the gold medal of our Geographical Society, and the silver medal of the Geographical Society of Paris, and that he was nominated, without ballot, a member of the Athenæum Club—an honour which has been described as the ‘Blue Riband of Literature.’ In Paris, too, the *savans* of that enlightened city received him with as much enthusiasm as our own people. It would have been strange if, at his early age, his head had not been somewhat ‘turned’ by all this success. But if it caused him to set a high value on his own services, it caused him also to strain his energies to the utmost not to disappoint the expectations which had been formed of him by others. A little youthful vanity is not a bad thing to help a man on in the world.

When Burnes returned to Bombay, he was ordered to rejoin his old appointment as assistant to the Resident in Cutch. In the course of the autumn he was despatched by

\* He went out overland in charge of despatches from the India House, and proceeded from Suez to Bombay in the *Hugh Lindsay* (pioneer) steamer, from which vessel he sent intelligence to Sir Charles Metcalfe that Lord Heytesbury had been appointed Governor-General of India.

Colonel Pottinger on a mission to Hyderabad, the capital of the Ameers of Sindh. 'I am doomed,' he wrote, 'to lead a vagabond life for ever ; but all this is in my way, and I am in great spirits.' But neither were his habits of so vagrant a character, nor the necessities of his work so engrossing, as to prevent him from thinking and writing about what has since been called the 'Condition-of-India Question.' He was very eager always for the moral elevation of the people, and he spoke with some bitterness of those who looked upon India merely as a preserve for the favoured European services. 'Do not believe,' he wrote to a friend, 'that I wish to supersede Europeans by unfit natives. I wish gradually to raise their moral standard, now so low, for which we are, however, more to blame than themselves. Men will say, "Wait till they are ready." I can only reply, that if you wait till men are fit for liberty, you will wait for ever. Somewhere in the *Edinburgh Review* of days of yore, you will find this sentiment, which is mine : "Will a man ever learn to swim without going into the water ?" ' After insisting on the duty of encouraging education by providing profitable employment for the educated classes, and declaring that we should thus soon cover the country with educated and thinking people, he continued in this letter from Hyderabad : 'There is nothing here that I cannot support by history. Tacitus tells us a similar tale of our own ancestors, among whom Agricola sowed the seeds of greatness. That accomplished historian speaks of the superstitions of the Britons—of the ferocity of the hill tribes—of the degeneracy of those who had been subdued—of the want of union which had led to it—of the alacrity with which they

paid their tribute, &c. &c. Change the name of Briton to Indian, and what have we but a sketch of this country under our present rule? And who are we? The descendants of those savages whom Agricola, by new and wise regulations, educated—we who are now glorious throughout the world.' And again, a few months later, he wrote: 'I look upon the services, one and all, as quite subservient to the great end of governing India; but I seldom meet with any one who looks upon India in any other light than as a place for those services, which is to me so monstrous, that I have, like Descartes, begun "to doubt my own existence, seeing such doubt around me."' He spoke of this with righteous indignation, but there was a tinge of exaggeration in his words; and he spoke somewhat too strongly even with reference to those times when he said that, 'instead of raising up a glorious monument to our memory, we should impoverish India more thoroughly than Nadir, and become a greater curse to it than were the hordes of Timour.'

But his services were now about to be demanded by the Government in a more independent position. Lord Auckland had proceeded to India as Governor-General. He had met Burnes at Bowood, had been pleased with his conversation, and had formed a high opinion of the energy and ability of the young subaltern. When, therefore, the first rude scheme of a pacific policy in the countries beyond the Indus took shape in his mind, he recognized at once the fact that Burnes must be one of its chief agents. So the Cutch Assistant was placed under the orders of the Supreme Government, and directed to hold himself in readiness to undertake what was described at the time, and is still known in history, as a

'Commercial mission' to Caubul. Commerce, in the vocabulary of the East, is only another name for conquest. By commerce, the East India Company had become the sovereigns of the great Indian peninsula; and this commercial mission became the cloak of grave political designs. Very soon the cloak was thrown aside as an encumbrance, and, instead of directing his energies to the opening of the navigation of the Indus, the institution of fairs, and the opening of the new commercial routes through the Afghan and Beloochee countries, Alexander Burnes gave up his mind to the great work of check-mating Russia in the East.

'In the latter end of November, 1836, I was directed by the Governor-General of India, the Earl of Auckland, to undertake a mission to Caubul. Lieutenant (now Major) Robert Leech, of the Bombay Engineers, Lieutenant John Wood, of the Indian Navy, and Percival B. Lord, Esq., M. B., were appointed with me in the undertaking. The objects of Government were to work out its policy of opening the river Indus to commerce, and establishing on its banks and in the countries beyond it such relations as should contribute to the desired end. On the 26th of November we sailed from Bombay, and sighting the fine palace at Mandavee on the 6th of December, we finally landed in Sindh on the 13th of the month. Dr Lord did not join our party till March.' Such is the first page of a book written some years afterwards by Sir Alexander Burnes, in which he tells the story of this visit to Caubul, stripped of all its political apparel. Neither in its commercial nor its scientific aspects was it wholly a failure.\* Burnes drew up a report on the trade of the Indus,

\* Lord Auckland, it should be stated, received this as a legacy

and Wood wrote an excellent paper on its navigation ; but events were developing themselves even faster than the ideas of the travellers ; and commerce and science, though not wholly forgotten, soon dwindled into second-rate affairs.

Lord Auckland was not an ambitious man—quiet, sensible, inclined towards peace, he would not have given himself up to the allurements of a greater game, if he had not been stimulated, past all hope of resistance, by evil advisers, who were continually pouring into his ears alarming stories of deep-laid plots and subtle intrigues emanating from the Cabinet of St Petersburg, and of the wide-spread corruption that was to be wrought by Russian gold. It was believed that the King of Persia had become the vassal of the great Muscovite monarch, and that he had been instigated by the Government of the Emperor to march an army to Herat for the capture of that famous frontier city, and for the further extension of his dominions towards the

from Lord William Bentinck, with whom Burnes had been in communication in India, and in correspondence during his residence in England. Whilst at home, Burnes had ceaselessly impressed on the King's ministers, as well as on the Directors of the Company, the importance of not neglecting, either in their commercial or their political aspects, the countries beyond the Indus ; and some of his letters, written at this time, give interesting accounts of his interviews with Lord Grey, Mr Charles Grant, Lord Lansdowne, and other statesmen, on this favourite subject. In one letter to Lord William Bentinck, he wrote that Lord Grey took a too European view of the question, and considered it chiefly 'in connection with the designs of Russia towards Constantinople ;' whilst Lord Lansdowne, having 'a mind cast in so noble a mould, looked with more interest on the great future of human society than on our immediate relations with those countries.

boundaries of our Indian Empire. The attack upon Herat was a substantial fact; the presence of Russian officers in the Persian territory, as aiders and abettors of the siege of Herat, was also a fact. The dangers which were apprehended were essentially very similar to those which had alarmed us more than a quarter of a century before, and which had caused the despatch of Mr Elphinstone's mission to Afghanistan. But there were some circumstantial differences. Not only had the Russian power taken the place of the French in the great drama of intrigue and aggression, but another actor had appeared upon the scene to take the leading business at Caubul. There had been a revolution, or a succession of revolutions, in Afghanistan. The Sudozye King, Shah Soojah, whom Elphinstone had met at Peshawur, was now a pensioner in the British dominions, and the Barukzye chief, Dost Mahomed, was dominant at Caubul.

This was the man who, in the autumn of 1837, welcomed the English gentlemen to his capital. 'On the 20th of September,' wrote Burnes in his published book, 'we entered Caubul, and were received with great pomp and splendour by a fine body of Afghan cavalry, led by the Ameer's son, Akbar Khan. He did me the honour to place me upon the same elephant on which he himself rode, and conducted us to his father's court, whose reception of us was most cordial. A spacious garden close to the palace, and inside the Balla Hissar of Caubul, was allotted to the mission as their place of residence. On the 21st of September we were admitted to a formal audience by Ameer Dost Mahomed Khan, and I then delivered to

him my credentials from the Governor-General of India. His reception of them was all that could be desired. I informed him that I had brought with me as presents to his Highness, some of the rarities of Europe; he promptly replied that we ourselves were the rarities, the sight of which best pleased him.' But neither the presents nor the promises, which Burnes was allowed to make to the Afghans, were of a character that could much gratify them. The fact is, that we sought much, and that we granted little. Dost Mahomed was at this time greatly perplexed and embarrassed. Alarmed by the attitude of the Sikhs on the one side,\* and of the Persians on the other, he looked to the English for support and assistance in his troubles. But weeks passed away, and weeks grew into months. The English gentlemen remained at Caubul, but he could extract no comfort from them; and, in the meanwhile a Russian agent had appeared upon the scene, less chary of his consolations. 'To the East,' said Burnes, 'the fears of Dost Mahomed were allayed; to the West they were increased. In this state of things his hopes were so worked upon, that the ultimate result was his estrangement from the British Government.'

It was our policy to secure the good offices of the Ameer, and it was the duty of Alexander Burnes to accomplish the

\* Whilst Burnes and his companion had been moving onward from Sindh to Afghanistan, through Beloochistan and the Punjab, the Sikhs and Afghans had been fighting for Peshawur. In May a great battle was fought at Jumrood, in which the Sikhs were victorious. The disturbed state of the country had delayed the progress of the Mission



object. Left to himself he would have done it. He, who best knew Dost Mahomed, had most faith in him. The Ameer was eager for the British alliance, and nothing was easier than to secure his friendship. But whilst Burnes was striving to accomplish this great object at Caubul, other counsels were prevailing at Simlah—that great hotbed of intrigue on the Himalayan hills—where the Governor-General and his secretaries were refreshing and invigorating themselves, and rising to heights of audacity which they never might have reached in the languid atmosphere of Calcutta. They conceived the idea of reinstituting the old deposed dynasty of Shah Soojah, and they picked him out of the dust of Loodhianah to make him a tool and a puppet, and with the nominal aid of Runjeet Singh, who saw plainly that we were making a mistake which might be turned to his advantage, they determined to replace the vain, weak-minded exile, whom his country had cast out as a hissing and a reproach, on the throne of Afghanistan. It is enough to state the fact. The policy was the policy of the Simlah Cabinet, with which Burnes had nothing to do. It was rank injustice to Dost Mahomed. It was rank injustice to Alexander Burnes. The young English officer, who had been twice the guest of the Barukzye Sirdars of Caubul, who had led them to believe that his Government would support them, and who had good and substantial reason to believe that they would be true to the English alliance, now found that he was fearfully compromised by the conduct of his official superiors. He left Caubul, and made his way to Simlah; and it is said that the secretaries received him

with eager entreaties not to spoil the 'great game' by dissuading Lord Auckland from the aggressive policy to which he had reluctantly given his consent.

This was in the summer of 1838. Even if the young Bombay officer could have spoken with 'the tongue of angels,' his words would have been too late. What could he do against a triumvirate of Bengal civilians—the ablest and most accomplished in the country? It is true that he had an intimate acquaintance, practical, personal, with the politics of Afghanistan, whilst all that they knew was derived from the book that he had written, from the writings of Mountstuart Elphinstone, and from another book of travels written by a young cavalry officer named Arthur Conolly, of whom I shall presently give some account in this volume. But they had had the ear of the Governor-General whilst Burnes had been working at Caubul; and so their crude theories prevailed against his practical knowledge. He was not, however, a man of a stubborn and obstinate nature, or one who could work out, with due ministerial activity, only the policy which he himself favoured. It is the sorest trial of official life to be condemned to execute measures, which you have neither recommended nor approved, and then to be identified with them as though they were your own. But every good public servant must consent to bear this burden with all becoming resignation and humility. The State could not be efficiently served, if every subordinate servant were to assume to himself the right of independent judgment. Burnes would have supported Dost Mahomed from the first, but when it was decreed that Shah Soojah

should be supported, Burnes endeavoured to reconcile himself to the policy, and did his best to render it successful.\* What his views were may be gathered from the following letter, which he wrote to Sir John Hobhouse, in December, 1838 'The retreat of the Persians from Herat has been to us all most gratifying intelligence, but the subsequent proceedings of the Shah raise up in my mind the strongest

\* From Simlah he wrote on the 10th of September, 1838, saying 'I implored the Government to act His Lordship lauded me for my abilities, &c, but thought I was travelling too fast, and would do nothing Matters got worse hourly Letters from Russian agents, promising everything to the Afghan chiefs, fell into my hands I founded on them further remonstrances at the supineness of Government, their eyes were opened, they begged of me to hold on at Canbul if I could, but I knew my duty better to my country, for meanwhile Russian good offices had been accepted to the exclusion of the British, and I struck my flag and returned to India, saying: "Behold what your tardiness has done!" You might think disgrace would follow such proceedings far from it—they applauded my vigour, and twenty thousand men are now under orders to do what a word might have done earlier, and two millions of money must be sunk in what I offered to do for two lakhs! How came this about? Persia has been urged by Russia to attack Herat and invade India Poor Dost Mahomed is afraid of the Sikhs on one side, and of Persia on the other Russia guaranteed him against Persia, and thus he clung to her instead of us Sagacity might have led him to act otherwise, but he was placed in difficult circumstances, and we augmented his difficulties. In the dilemma they asked my views I replied: "Self defence is the first law of nature If you cannot bring round Dost Mahomed, whom you have used infamously, you must set up Shah Soojah as a puppet, and establish a supremacy in Afghanistan, or you will lose India" This is to be done, and we have drawn closer to Runjeet Singh, who has feathered his nest in our dilemma, and kept all his Afghan country, under our promise of support.

doubt of our having brought his Majesty to reason, or done aught but to postpone the evil day for a time. The frontier fortress of Afghanistan—Ghorian—is still garrisoned by Persian troops, and besides a messenger on the part of the Shah now at Candahar and Caubul, the Russian officer, Captain Vicovitch, is at Candahar, and has already distributed 10,000 ducats among the chiefs who have called out their retainers, and are now on their route to invest Herat. The Russian declares on all occasions that Mahomed Shah will return, and that the money he distributes is not Russian gold, but that of the Shah; and further, that if Herat falls into their hands, the Russians will then lead the Afghans to the Attock (Indus). After the gallant defence made by Herat, it might not appear at all possible that the chiefs of Candahar should capture it with their rabble band; but still I have some apprehensions, as well from the reduced and dilapidated state of Herat itself, as from its being now about to be invested by Afghans. In their wars, victory is decided by defection. The minister of Herat is unpopular, and he will not be able to rouse the courage of his people by their fighting against the enemies of their religion, as were the Sheeah Persians. On the raising of the siege of Herat, I wrote at once to Lieutenant Pottinger, sending him 20,000 rupees, and telling him “to draw on me for such a sum as is indispensable to place the walls of Herat in a state of repair, and relieve its suffering inhabitants from want,” and I have received the Governor-General’s sanction to send him a lakh of rupees; but in a subsequent part of this letter I will point out that we ought to make much larger sacrifices than this, and as Lord Auckland does not as yet know of the

extent of this new Russian intrigue, I shall, without hesitation, cash any bill from Herat for money expended as I have stated. Till I received very precise accounts of Vico-vitch's proceedings, I could not unravel the object of his intrigue, but I have had a practical proof of it within this week from the chief of Khelat, the first ruler we shall encounter on our way to Candahar, and through whose territory is the great Pass of Bolan. To an invitation sent to this person to co-operate with us, from Lord Auckland, Shah Soojah, and myself, he tells me that he is a friend, and will do all that is wished, but, that he wants certain territories restored to him; that he supports the Shah only to oblige us, and that the chief of Candahar had offered him a part of the Russian gold now and hereafter to side with him. As an alliance between Candahar and Khelat is perfectly out of the question, and Mehrab Khan's (the chief is so called) pretensions, if allowed to take root, would involve serious embarrassment, I have plainly told him that he is either to be a friend or a foe, and I have little doubt that all will go right with him. But it is not the small chiefship of Khelat or its petty politics that would lead me to trouble you with an introduction of them. What is to be said to a regular train of proof now brought to light of Russian intrigue from Khelat to Kokund, or from the sea to the northern portion of Cashmere! It is clear, and appears to me imperative on the British Government to spare neither expense nor labour to supplant this growing influence. It is, therefore, with every satisfaction that I see the Governor-General resolved upon carrying through his measures, even though Herat be relieved, for we can have

no security for the future without rearing a solid fabric westward of the Indus. Our policy there for the last thirty years has been so supine and full of reserve, that we have to thank ourselves only for the evils that have accumulated. It is not fitting in me to say things of what might have been so easily done by us in Caubul and Candahar last year, since, however much the loss of that opportunity is to be regretted, the basis of the present war is self-defence, the first law of nature. On that stable ground the Government can and must defend its measures, and if sympathy and faction united raise up a party to side with Dost Mahomed Khan, they may paint with much colour the hardship of his case (and it is a very hard one), but all faction must sink before the irrefragable evidence that our Indian Empire is endangered by a further perseverance in our late and inert policy. But supposing our plans for placing Shah Soojah on the throne of his ancestors to succeed, it is evident that we shall have a strong under-current of intrigue to work up against, and that Russia will now add to her former means of intriguing through the Persians in Afghanistan, the unseated rulers of Caubul and Candahar. All our energies will, therefore, be called forth, for I consider Persia to be as much subject to Russia as India is to Britain, and we must make up our minds to oppose her, face to face, on the Afghan frontier. My journey to Bokhara in 1832 served to convince me that Russia had ulterior designs eastward, which I expressed as firmly as I believed, but it was not the policy of the day to check them. I did not think that her progress and intrigues would have been so rapid as they have been, and I then believed that we might have injured Russia in these countries

by giving encouragement to the Indus commerce and founding fairs, but all these hopes are now vain, without the display of physical power aiding our moral influence. I have urged Lord Auckland to fortify Herat on the principles most approved by engineers. I will give the same advice with reference to Candahar when it falls to us, and I hope in the course of a month to have received from the chief of Northern Sindh (to whose Court I am accredited as Envoy) the fortress of Bukkur. The grand line of route will thus be in our hands, and at Caubul itself we shall have a strong government by supporting the Shah, and a good pledge for his continued friendship in the British officers we have placed in his service.

When it was determined by Lord Auckland's Government that a great army should be assembled for the invasion of Afghanistan and the restoration of Shah Soojah to the throne of Caubul, the army was to march by the way of the Bolan Pass, through the country ruled by the Ameers of Sindh, and Burnes was to be sent forward to make all necessary arrangements for the passage of our army through those little known and difficult regions to Candahar. If he had formed any expectation of being vested with the supreme political control of the expedition, and afterwards of representing British interests at the Court of Shah Soojah, they were not unreasonable expectations. But Mr Macnaghten was appointed 'Envoy and Minister' at Caubul, whilst Captain Burnes, in the vice-regal programme having no assured place, was to be employed as a wayside emissary. But the sharpness of his disappointment was mitigated by the receipt of letters announcing that the Queen had taken

his services into gracious consideration, and had made him a Knight, with the military rank of Lieutenant-Colonel. This sent him about his work with better heart, and he brought all his energies to bear upon the important duty of smoothing the road for the march of the army of the Indus, and the procession of the restored Suddozye monarch into the heart of the country, which never wanted him, and which he was wholly incompetent to govern.

Nor were these the only gratifying circumstances which raised his spirits at this time. He found that the policy which he would have worked out in Afghanistan, though thwarted by the Simlah Cabinet, had found favour in high places at home. Lord Auckland himself frankly acknowledged this, and generously afforded Burnes full license to enjoy his victory. 'I enclose a letter from the Governor-General himself,' wrote Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Alexander Burnes, from Shikarpore, on the 4th of December, 'which is a document very dear to me, and which I told Lord Auckland I prized as high as the honours themselves. The fact is, I have been playing the boldest game a man ever dared. I differed entirely with the Governor-General as to his policy in Afghanistan, told him it would ruin us, cost the nation millions, when a few lakhs now would keep off Russia. They would not be guided by me, and sent me a laudatory wig (reprimand), and as sure as I had been a prophet, my predictions are verified. Russia is upon us, and the Home Government has pronounced me right and his Lordship wrong! This is the greatest hit I have made in life. Seeing how they had mismanaged all things, they asked my advice; but, like all timid politicians, they ran



from one extreme to another. An army was necessary, but not so large an army. However, I told Lord Auckland I should do all I could to work out his views, and am doing so. The declaration of war you will see in the papers, and how much has come out of my mission to Caubul.\*

At this time Burnes was employed on a mission to the Ameers of Sindh, with the object of smoothing the way for the advance of the British army, which was to march, by way of the Bolan Pass, to Candahar and Caubul. It was not work that could be accomplished without some harshness and injustice, and there are indications in his correspondence that he did not much like the course, which he was compelled to pursue, in dealing with Meer Roostum of Khyrpore, from whom the cession of Bukkur was to be obtained. But he had a natural taste for diplomacy, and the issues of success sometimes so dazzled his eyes, that he did not see very clearly the true nature of the means of accomplishment. 'I have been travelling to Khyrpore,' he wrote to Percival Lord, on New Year's-day, 1839,

\* The following is the text of Lord Auckland's letter. 'Simlah, Nov 5, 1838.—My dear Sir,—I cordially congratulate you on the public proofs of approbation with which you have been marked at home. My private letters speak in high terms of your proceedings at Caubul, and I may in candour mention that upon the one point upon which there was some difference between us—the proposed advance of money to Candahar—opinions for which I have the highest respect, are in your favour. I do not grudge you this, and am only glad that a just tribute has been paid to your ability and indefatigable zeal. The superscription of this letter will, in case you have not received direct accounts, explain my meaning to you.—Yours, very faithfully, AUCKLAND.'

'treaty-making on a great scale, and, what is well, carrying all before me. I have got the fortress of Bukkur ceded to us on our own terms (which are, that we are to hold it now and during war)—the Khyrpore State to place itself under British protection; and a clause has been inserted in my treaty paving the way for the abolition of all tolls on the Indus! Huzza! See how old Roostum and his minister (the *Boree*, as you christened him) have cut up. You did not expect such a *chef-d'œuvre* as this, which is a fit ending to the Caubul mission, since by Bukkur the Macedonians bridled the neighbouring nations. All these great doings happened at Christmas, and I wanted your hilarious tones to make the enjoyment of the day complete.'

There was other work, too, for him at this time—other treaties to be thrust down the throats of the Sindh Ameers. Higher up, along the line of our advancing army, Mehrab Khan of Khelat was to be brought to terms. Burnes, who was officially 'Envoy to the Chief of Khelat or other States,' was, of course, sent forward to negotiate the desired treaty, and to obtain, from the Chief, supplies for the troops who were passing through his territory. But they had already devastated his country; there was no grain to be had, and all the food that could be supplied to our army consisted of some ill-fed sheep. 'The English,' said Mehrab Khan to Burnes, 'have come, and by their march through my country, in different directions, destroyed the crops, poor as they were, and have helped themselves to the water that irrigated my lands, made doubly valuable in this year of scarcity.' 'I might have allied myself,' he added, 'with

Persia and Russia; but I have seen you safely through the great defile of the Bolan, and yet I am unrewarded.' The reward he sought was, that he might be relieved for ever from the mastery of the Suddozye kings; but, instead of this, it was made a condition of any kind of peaceable negotiation with him, that he should pay homage to Shah Soojah in his camp. Reluctantly bowing to the hard necessity, he consented, and the treaty was sealed. The English undertook to pay him an annual subsidy of a lakh and a half of rupees, in return for which he was to do his best to obtain supplies for us, and to keep open the passes for our convoys. Burnes saw clearly that he had to deal in this instance with a man of great shrewdness and ability. He was warned by the chief that the expedition on which the English had embarked had the seeds of failure within it. 'The Khan,' wrote Burnes to Macnaghten, 'with a good deal of earnestness, enlarged upon the undertaking the British had embarked in; declared it to be one of vast magnitude and difficult accomplishment; that instead of relying on the Affghan nation, our Government had cast them aside, and inundated the country with foreign troops; that if it was our end to establish ourselves in Afghanistan, and give Shah Soojah the nominal sovereignty of Caubul and Candahar, we were pursuing an erroneous course; that all the Afghans were discontented with the Shah, and all Mahomedans alarmed and excited at what was passing; that day by day men returned discontented, and we might find ourselves awkwardly situated if we did not point out to Shah Soojah his errors, if the fault originated with him, and alter them if they sprung from ourselves; that the chief

of Caubul (Dost Mahomed) was a man of ability and resource, and though we could easily put him down by Shah Soojah even in our present mode of procedure, we could never win over the 'Afghan nation by it.' Truer words than these were seldom spoken; and often, doubtless, as events developed themselves in Afghanistan, did Burnes think over the warnings of that ill-fated Khelat chief.

How the British army entered Afghanistan, how Dost Mahomed was driven out of the country, how the people for a while sullenly acquiesced in the revolution, which was accomplished by the force of British bayonets and the influence of British gold, are matters which belong to history. The further we advanced, the more difficult became the solution of the question, 'What is to be done with Sir Alexander Burnes?' At one time there was some thought of his going to Herat, but this was abandoned. On the 18th of June he wrote from Candahar to one of his brothers, saying: 'In possession of Candahar, the affairs of Herat first engaged our attention, and I was nominated to proceed there with guns and money to make a treaty. After being all ready to go, Macnaghten announced his intention of going back to Simlah, and suggested my going on to Caubul to take charge of the mission. When he went, I at once chose to go to Caubul, for the policy of Government in Herat affairs I do not like. A King at Caubul and another at Herat are "two Kings at Brentford," from which I foresee serious evils. I wished them to put all under Shah Soojah, but after Stoddart had been ejected, young Pottinger allowed himself to be apologized to for their threatening to murder him, and the opportunity was

lost. The wretches have again quarrelled with Pottinger, and cut off a hand of one of his servants; but this also is for the present made up, and Major Todd starts to-morrow for Herat, and I predict can do nothing, for nothing is to be done with them. Kamran is an imbecile, and the Minister, Yar Mahomed, is a bold but doubtful man. . . . . The King and I are great friends, but I cannot shut my eyes to the fact that he has nothing in common with the chief of Caubul. But he is legitimate, and that is a great point; and we are to keep him on the throne, so that I think things will go much better than is generally believed.'

Shah Soojah was restored to the Balla Hissar of Caubul, and Sir Alexander Burnes settled down into a most anomalous and unsatisfactory position. He had no power and no responsibility. He gave advice which was seldom taken, and he saw things continually going wrong without any power to set them right. It is impossible to conceive any more unpleasant situation than that which for more than two years—during the latter part of 1839, and all through 1840 and 1841—he occupied at the Court of Caubul. If, at that time, he had not been sometimes irritable, and sometimes desponding, he would have been more or less than a man. He had been taught to believe that Macnaghten had been sent only for a little space into Afghanistan, to be soon removed to a higher office, and then that he himself would be placed in the supreme direction of affairs. But month after month—nay, year after year—passed, and there was no change; and Burnes began to write somewhat bitterly of the good faith of the Governor-

General, and to contrast his conduct with the soft words of the man who had spoken so kindly and encouragingly to him on the 'couch at Bowood.' His correspondence at this time reflects, as in a glass, a mind altogether unsettled, if not discontented. He wanted active, stirring work; and, save on rare occasions, there was little or none for him. He was disappointed, too, and perhaps somewhat embittered; for a great crop of honours had resulted from this invasion of Afghanistan. Sir John Keane had been made a Peer, and Mr Macnaghten a Baronet; and Burnes thought that his just claim to further distinction had been ignored. He might have been reconciled to this, for his own honours were of very recent growth, if the Governor-General had placed him in a position of dignity and responsibility. But there was really nothing to be done for the Political Second-in-command. It was at one time discussed whether he might not be appointed 'Resident at Candahar;' but this scheme was abandoned; and at last Burnes came to the conclusion that it was his special mission to receive three thousand rupees a month for the mere trouble of drawing the money.

There was not one of his correspondents to whom he unburdened himself so freely as to his friend Percival Lord (then employed in the neighbourhood of Bameean, near the Hindoo-Koosh), to whom he wrote freely, alike on Afghan politics and on his own personal position. A few illustrative extracts from this correspondence may be given here: 'Caulbul, November 2, 1839. I have been expecting to hear from you on this astounding intelligence from Turkistan. I have letters from Nazir Khan Oollah that leave no doubt of the Russians having come to Khiva, or

being on the road there. Have they ulterior views or not? Is Herat their end, or Bokhara? It is evident that your presence is required at Bokhara, but that cannot be in the present distracted state of the country; native agency must be employed, and more than spies. Macnaghten has, therefore, resolved on sending Mahomed Hoosein Karkee to tell the King that his proceedings in not answering our letters, in threatening our cossids, in fearing Shah Soojah, are all wrong, with much other matter of that kind. The officials you will get all in due time, but this is to give you notice that Karkee is coming to you to get his final instructions. He is a clever fellow, and has killed his pig with the Dost and the King of Persia, so there is no fear of his taking their part. He may be bribed by Russia, but that we cannot help, and it is but right to give the King of Bokhara a chance. I wish to God you could go yourself, and I know Lord A. wishes it, but he declares that the country is not safe, and that, after Stoddart's fate, he has a great reluctance to put our officers in what the Field-Marshal would call a false position. I for one believe in all the reports of the advance of Russia. Of course her fifty regiments may be but ten; but we had better look out, seeing the Dost is loose, and Herat with its walls unprepared. As a precautionary measure, the Bombay column will be halted after Khelat is settled, till we see what turns up——' 'November 10. Old Toorkistanee as you are, you seem to be quite quiescent about the Russian movement in Orgunje, and do not, I imagine from your silence, believe it, but I assure you it is a serious business. I have a letter from Herat twenty-seven days old confirming it, and giving particulars about the

Vizier, Yar Mahomed Khan, being tampered with by the Russians, all of which seems to have been concealed from Todd. I am most anxious to hear further, and have sent a Hindoo on to Khiva itself, who will pass through your camp in a day or two. I have letters from London explanatory of Vicovitch's death, which Count Nesselrode writes to Lord Palmerston was annoying them, as the Russian Government had blamed Simonich, and not Vicovitch——' November 22. Here is a curious anecdote for you; let me have your opinion. A couple of years before our mission arrived at Caubul, Vicovitch (the true Vicovitch) came to Bokhara, called at Ruheem Shah's relative's house, and asked him to send letters to Masson at Caubul for MM. Al-lard and Vutura. The King of Bokhara took offence at Vicovitch's presence, and the Koosh-Begge sent him off sharp. So the letters were never sent. This shows an earlier intention to intrigue on the part of Russia; but how came Masson not to report this, and if he reported it, how came he to give, years afterwards, twenty-one reasons for Vicovitch not being what he was? I cannot unravel this. I once spoke of this before to you, and to no other man——' 'December 13. How can I say things go wrong? Sheets of foolscap are written in praise of the Shah's contingent, and, as God is my judge, I tremble every time I hear of its being employed that it will compromise its officers. You cannot, then, imagine I would ever advocate a weak and yet undisciplined corps garrisoning Bameean. Your remark about employing Afghans in Koonce and Khyber, as you may well imagine, agrees with my own views, but I am not the *Envoy*. I see European soldiers sent to look after Khyberees,



and as well might they be sent after wild sheep. I see, what is worse, Craigie's corps sent after the disaffected at Koonnee, when they are not yet drilled, and when Afghans are quite up to the work. From all this I see that Shah Soojah never can be left without a British army, for his own contingent will never be fit for anything——' 'January 7, 1840. I will send you a letter from Lord Auckland to me, wishing again to make me Resident at Candahar, but not to go there unless it 'pleased' me. I replied to Macnaghten that this useless correspondence had been going on since August, and it was high time to do what had been proposed—to give me Resident's pay. Imprisoning rupees and reading are now my engagements, and I have begun the year with a resolution of making no more suggestions, and of only speaking when spoken to. I do not say this in ill humour—quite the reverse. A ~~scribble~~<sup>scrawl</sup> from Machiavelli supports me. "A man who, instead of acting for the best, acts *as he ought*, seeks rather his ruin than his preservation"——' 'Jan. 11. Lord Auckland took a step in sending an army into this country contrary to his own judgment, and he cares not a sixpence what comes of the policy, so that he gets out of it. All the despatches plainly prove this; and Macnaghten now begins to see his own false position, suggests remedies, and finds himself for the first time snubbed by the very Governor-General whose letters have been hitherto a fulsome tissue of praise. The Envoy sees that Russia is coming on, that Herat is not what it ought to have been—ours, and his dawning experience tells him that, if not for us, it is against us. What says Lord Auckland? "I disagree with you. Yar Mahomed is to be conciliated.

Russia is friendly to England, and I do not credit her advance on us, though she may have an expedition against Khiva. I wonder," adds his Lordship to the Envoy, "that you should countenance attacks on Herat contrary to treaty" (who made that treaty? Macnaghten!); "that you should seek for more troops in Afghanistan. It is your duty to rid Afghanistan of troops." All very fine, but mark the result—calamity, loss of influence, and with it loss of rupees. In these important times, what occupies the King and this Envoy? The cellars of his Majesty's palace have been used as powder-magazines to prevent a mosque being "desecrated." They would have been put in the citadel, but his Majesty objected, as they overlooked his harem! This objection dire necessity has removed, and to the citadel they have gone. Read the enclosures, and see what is said of Colonel Denuie's occupying, not the palace, but a house outside, held formerly by sweepers and laddoos! From this, in the midst of winter, though Brigadier, he has been ejected; but he declares before God that it shall be the Governor-General alone who turns him out. These are the occupations of the King and Envoy. See what Sir W. Cotton says of it. In Persia, in Egypt, in Muscat, the guests of the Sovereigns occupy palaces, and Shah Soojah declares he will resign his throne if he be so insulted—insulted by the contamination of those men who bled for him and placed him where he is. What, my dear Lord, do I mean by all this? *Ex uno disce omnes*. Be silent, pocket your pay, do nothing but what you are ordered, and you will give high satisfaction. They will sacrifice you and me, or any one, without caring a straw. This does not originate from vice, I believe, but

from ignorance. Drowning men catch at straws, and whenever anything goes wrong, other backs must bear the brand. An *exposé* of the policy from the day we were bound hand and foot at Lahore, till Shah Soojah threatened to resign his throne because of the cellars of his palace being occupied by munitions of war when Russia was on the Oxus, would make a book which all future diplomatists could never in blunder surpass; but why should it be otherwise? The chief priest, ere he started, asked if Khiva were on the Indus! Bah! I blame the Governor-General for little; if he is a timid man, he is a good man. W. hoodwinked him about Caubul when I was here; another now hoodwinks him. The one cost us two millions, the other will cost us ten. His Lordship has just written to me to give him my say on public matters. Am I a fool? He does not want truth; he wants support, and when I can give it I shall do so loudly; when I cannot, I shall be silent——' 'Jan. 26. They have been at me again to write "on the prospects of the restored Government," as I think I told you before. I am no such gaby. If they really wanted truth, I would give it cordially, but it is a cunning-in, a coincidence of views, which they seek; and I can go a good way, but my conscience has not so much stretch as to approve of this dynasty. But, mum—let that be between ourselves——' 'Feb. 18. The Envoy is, or pretends to be, greatly annoyed at my being left out of the list of the honoured, and has written four letters on it; three to me, and one to Nicolson. I am not in the least surprised. Every month brings with it proofs of Lord A.'s hostility or dislike. Serves me right,

I ought never to have come here, or allowed myself to be pleased with fair though false words. As a sample, look; they burked the paragraph on me in Sir John (Baron) Keane's despatch because I was a political. Next fight at Khelat, the paragraph on the political Bean is printed. I bide my time, and I may be set down as highly presumptuous; but if I live, I expect to be a G.C.B. instead of a C.B.—' February 28. You tell me to accept the Residency at Candahar; it is well I refused it. The Court of Directors have officially sanctioned it, and Lord Auckland says I am to have Resident's pay, but to be Political Agent! Did you ever? However, my refusal had gone in, backed by Macnaghten, and they make me *Resident at Caubul*, but I expect nothing from them after such base ingratitude. The reasons why I refused Candahar were, that I should be as dependent there as here, with a certainty of collision in Herat affairs, over which I was to have "some control." Now I could not have had that without making my silence my dishonesty, and I resolved on "biding my time" here. I have heard no more of the Shah's move to Candahar; it is necessary on many accounts; but it may not take place on that account — ' March 4. There is no two days' fixity of purpose — no plan of the future policy, external or internal, on which you can depend a week. The bit-by-bit system prevails. Nothing comprehensive is looked to; the details of the day suffice to fill it up, and the work done is not measured by its importance, but by being work, and this work consists of details and drawing money. We are in a fair way of proving all Mr Elphinstone said in his letter to me, and I

for one begin to think Wade will be the luckiest of us all to be away from the break-down; for, unless a new leaf is turned over, break down we shall.'

Though condemned thus painfully to official inactivity, the restless spirit of Alexander Burnes was continually embracing all the great questions which the antagonism of England and Russia in Central Asia were then throwing up for practical solution. He had made up his own mind very distinctly upon the subject. He somewhat exaggerated the aggressive designs of Russia; but, starting from such premises, he was logically right in contending that our best policy was to strengthen ourselves in Afghanistan, and not to endeavour either to oppose by arms or to baffle by diplomacy the progress of the Muscovite in Central Asia. There were other British officers, however, in the Afghan dominions at that time, who, thinking less of Russian aggressiveness and more of Central Asian provocations, felt that much good might be effected by peaceful mediation—especially by the good work of endeavouring to liberate the Russian subjects, who had been carried off into slavery by the man-stealers of those barbarous States.\* It remained for a later generation to endorse these views, and to believe that England and Russia might act harmoniously together in Central Asia in the interests of universal humanity. Very steadfastly and persistently did Burnes set his face against them. His own opinions were stated most emphatically in letters, which he addressed to Sir William Mac-

\* I touch but cursorily on this subject here, because it will be illustrated more fully in subsequent *Memoirs of Arthur Conolly and D'Arcy Todd*.

naghten in this year : ' I have just received your very interesting letter of the 13th,' he wrote to the Envoy, on the 16th of April, ' with its enclosure, an extract from the Governor-General's letter regarding the designs of Russia. I now feel somewhat at ease since his Lordship has become cognizant of the real state of affairs on our frontier, as we shall no longer be acting on a blind reliance that the expedition to Khiva was small, and would be unsuccessful, when it is an army composed of the élite of their empire, and has made good its lodgment on the delta of the Oxus. After the Punic faith which Russia has exhibited, I confess I was astonished to see Lord Clanricarde put trust in what Count Nesselrode told him of the strength of the Russian force, and you may rely upon it that we are better judges of what Russia is doing in Turkistan than our ambassador at St Petersburg, and I hope the correctness of all our information from first to last will now lead to the most implicit reliance being hereafter placed upon it. One correspondent may exaggerate and distort, but it is not in the nature of falsehood to be consistent; and of inconsistency we have had none, the cry being that Russia has entered Turkistan with the design of setting up her influence there, and that (whether her ruler or ministers admit it or not) her object is to disturb us in Afghanistan. European intelligence confirms all this; and with a failing peculiarly her own, Russia has, for the present, left the Turkish question to be settled by England and France, and even in her generosity agreed to open the Black Sea. "*Timeo Danaos et dona ferentes.*" Firmly impressed with these views, they tincture all my thoughts and opinions, and, in consequence, lead me

to hope that our every nerve will be strained to consolidate Afghanistan, and that nothing of any kind, political or military, may take place beyond the passes. Had we force sufficient, the occupation of Balkh might not be a bad military move, and one which would, in truth, show "an imposing attitude;" but with Russia at Khiva, and negotiating for the residence of a permanent ambassador at Bokhara, we shall at once precipitate a collision with her by such a step, and with our present force I consider it hopeless, even if our rear were clear, which it is not. The attitude of the Sikhs towards us is that of undisguised hostility, and on both our front and rear we have cause for deep reflection—I will not say alarm, for I do not admit it; we have only to play the good game we have begun, and exhibit Shah Soojah as the real King, to triumph over our difficulties. The security from that triumph, however, is not an advance to Turkistan, but first a quieting of our rear, and redress of grievances at home. You will guess, then, what I think of any of our officers going in any capacity to Turkistan, to Khiva, Bokhara, or Kokund. I regarded Abbott's departure to Khiva as the most unhappy step taken during the campaign, and his language at Khiva, which will all be repeated to Russia, places us in a position far more equivocal than Russia was placed in by Vicovitch being here. We had no ground of complaint against Dost Mahomed (till he joined our enemies), and two great European powers merely wished for his friendship; but Russia has at Khiva just grounds for complaint, and still Captain Abbott tells the Khan that he must have no communication with Russia, but release her slaves, and have done with her.

It is well to remember that Russia has extensive trade passing through Khiva, and that the proclamation of war declares that the object of the expedition is to redress the merchants for exactions. Is England to become security for barbarous hordes some thousands of miles from her frontier? If not, Captain Abbott's promises and speeches must compromise us. I observe you proceed on the supposition that Russia wants only her slaves released, but this is one of ten demands only, and instead of our language, therefore, being pertinent on that head, that we insist on her relief, it means nothing, for Captain Abbott tells us that the Khan had offered to release them all, and I know that the King of Bokhara has made a treaty to that effect, and acts up to it; for Captain A. likewise confirms the information frequently reported, that the King there is bought by Russia. We have in consequence, I think, no business in Khiva, and, however much we may wish it, none in Bokhara. The remaining State is Kokund, and we shall know the probable good of a connection with it. In my letter to A. Conolly, I enclosed some "observations on sending a mission to Khiva," but I did not then discuss the policy of the King. I merely, in reply to Conolly's request for hints, pointed out the difficulties of the road and of communication when there. But my first question is the *cui bono* of this mission in a political point of view? In a geographical one, no one can doubt its high expediency. What are we to get from it? Nothing, I see, but to attach to ourselves just and deserved reproach for interfering with Russia in ground already occupied by her merchants, and ground far beyond our own line of operations. The



measure will irritate Russia, who will at once march on Balkh to assert her just position, as she calls it, in Central Asia; and then, indeed, the Governor-General's surmises will be proved. It will give uneasiness to "all surrounding States, and add difficulty to the game which we have to play." But one very serious obstacle to all interference with Turkistan has apparently been overlooked. Russia is not engaged *alone* in the enterprise. She has her ally of Persia, and ambassadors, too, to seek the release of the Persian slaves. Are we prepared to insist on this, and reconstruct the whole fabric of society by marching back some two or three hundred thousand slaves? If not, our proceedings are neither consonant with humanity nor the rights of nations; and if they are, the only chance of success is to leave Russia alone, or to aid her with a military force; the former the only judicious course for us to pursue. I have been thus earnest on this very momentous question from the anxiety which I feel to see our cause flourish, and our good name preserved. It is not the question of Lord or Conolly going. That is a mere trifle, which does not call for a moment's consideration. I believe the deputation of any one to Turkistan at this time to be a serious error. If it is to be, I shall, of course, do all I can by information, and by getting good people to assist the officers sent; but I hope you will excuse my beseeching you to weigh the step well before it is taken. Rely upon it, the English Cabinet can alone settle this question, and it must be at London or St Petersburg, and not at Kokund, Bokhara, or Khiva, that we are to counteract Russia. Let us crown the passes. Let an engineer be forthwith sent to map them, and let

grain (as you have just proposed) be stored behind them at Bameean. Let alarm be allayed by our not appearing to stir overmuch; for Caubul is the place for the corps d'armée, and not Bameean, which should be its outwork, and, as such, strengthened. We should have done with dealing with the Oosbeks, for it is time. In Khiva we have our agent detained. At Bokhara, poor Stoddart's captivity reflects seriously upon our character, and damages it here; while in Kokund I see no possible good likely to flow, even from the most splendid success attending the agent, and, on the contrary, much chance of evil.'

Some three or four weeks after this letter was written, Macnaghten orally proposed that Burnes himself should proceed on a mission to the Russian camp. Burnes replied that he would go if he were ordered; and after the interview, having thought well over the matter, he wrote on the same evening a letter to the Envoy, saying: 'With reference to our conversation this morning, when I stated my readiness to proceed to General Peroffski's camp with alacrity, if the Governor-General would but grant to me credentials and powers to act as stated in Lord Palmerston's letter—i. e. to tell the Russian General if he sought to subvert the political influence of the Khan of Khiva, after due reparation had been made to him, and did not withdraw his force, Great Britain would consider Russia in the light of an enemy—another view of the subject has since struck me—Will you, as the representative of the British nation, grant to me such credentials and powers? Lord Auckland requested you to communicate with the Russian General by a messenger, but the interests of the public service have

pointed out to you the propriety of deviating from such instructions in so far as to send an officer instead of a messenger. With the explicit views, then, of the British Cabinet transmitted officially to you by the Governor-General, do you feel yourself authorized to draw up credentials empowering me to go as far as the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has gone? If so, I am ready, without awaiting the Governor-General's reply, to undertake the mission, as I then see in it a chance of gaining the ends of our Government without risking any little reputation I may have. If, on the other hand, you merely mean to convey to General Peroffski a hope, or request by letter, that he will not exceed the Emperor's instructions, this will be but the duty of a courier, and as my personal insight would thus fall below zero, I have no desire to undertake the journey; though even then, as I have reported to Conolly and yourself, I will proceed there, if you are of opinion it is desirable, and you think I can advance the public interests. If, however, you do not feel yourself authorized to grant to me the powers which seem necessary, your letter of to-day to Lord Auckland may, perhaps, draw such credentials from his Lordship, and if so, I shall hold myself in readiness on their arrival here to follow Conolly to the Russian camp, taking, if possible, the Oxus as my route, by which I could reach Khiva with great expedition, and to political objects add a knowledge of that river, now so important to us.'

But before there was any necessity to bring this question to the point of practical solution, intelligence was received at Caubul which consigned it to the limbo of vanities and abortions. Another mission had proceeded to the Russian

camp—a mission from Heaven in the shape of that great white enemy, which was destined at a later date to put our own armies to confusion. Peroffski's legions were arrested by the destroying snow, and decimated by pestilence and famine. This source of inquietude was, therefore, removed, and Burnes was again driven back into inactivity \* The summer passed quietly over his head, but the autumn found him and all his countrymen at Caubul in a state of extreme excitement. Dost Mahomed was again in arms against the Feringhees, who had driven him from his country. He was coming down from the regions beyond the Hindoo-Koosh, raising the tribes on the way, and calling on the children of the Prophet to expel the usurping unbelievers. A British force was sent into the Kohistan, under the command of Sir Robert Sale; and Burnes went with it in chief

\* When men—especially men of active habits—have very little to do, they are frequently disturbed by small troubles, which, at times of greater activity, would pass unnoticed. At this period Burnes was greatly irritated by some comments on Affghan affairs in the Calcutta and Agra papers. With reference to a letter in the Agra *Ukhar*, which had reflected on some of the proceedings of Dr Lord, Burnes wrote to his friend, saying: 'I think that a simple letter under your name calling the man a cowardly slanderer and a villain, or some such choice word, would be a good mode of rebutting him.' As if truth were to be established by calling men hard names! In another letter Burnes wrote to Lord: 'You have a viper in your Artillery named Kaye, who writes in the *Hurkaru*,' &c. &c The viper referred to is the writer of this book. I had, as a young man, perhaps a little too fond of my pen, emphatically protested against our entire policy in Afghanistan, and predicted its speedy collapse—which prediction, in the first flush of success, my countrymen in India, with few exceptions, were wont to deride.

political control of the expedition. How badly everything fared with us at the first may be gathered from the fact that the latter wrote to the Envoy, saying that there was nothing left for our troops but to fall back on Caubul, and there to concentrate all our strength. This was on the 2nd of November—a day of evil omen; for then Burnes's days were numbered by the days of a single year. He saw the last victorious charge of the Ameer; he saw our troops flying before him; he saw his friends and associates, Broadfoot and Lord, fall mortally wounded from their horses; and he himself narrowly escaped. This was but the darkest hour before the dawn. On the following day Dost Mahomed surrendered himself to the British Envoy, and, instead of a formidable enemy, became a harmless State prisoner. Then the spirits of Burnes and of his associates at Caubul began to rise. Writing a few weeks afterwards to one of his brothers, he said: 'Caubul, November 24, 1840. I have been too much occupied these two months past to write to you, and though it has pleased Providence to crown our efforts with success, and to permit me to play a prominent part, I have yet to mourn the loss of two very dear friends, Dr Lord and Lieutenant Broadfoot. How I escaped unscathed God only knows. I have a ball which fell at my feet, and of three political officers, I have alone lived to tell the tale. Make no parade of these facts. My interview with Dost Mahomed Khan was very interesting and very affectionate. He taunted me with nothing, said I was his best friend, and that he had come in on a letter I had written to him. This I disbelieve, for we followed him from house to house, and he was obliged to surrender. On that

letter, however, I hope I shall have got for him an annual stipend of two lakhs of rupees instead of one. On our parting, I gave him an Arab horse ; and what think you he gave me ? His own, and only sword, and which is stained with blood. He left this for India some fourteen days ago, and is to live at Loodiana. In Kohistan I saw a failure of our artillery to breach, of our European soldiers to storm, and of our cavalry to charge ; and yet God gave us the victory. And now Kurruck Singh is dead, and Now Nihal, the new ruler of the Punjab, killed while attending his father's funeral by a gate falling on him, Shere Singh reigns in his stead. Read the prediction in my *Travels*, vol. i., pp. 298-9, second edition, on this head. If we could turn over a new leaf here, we might soon make Afghanistan a barrier. You regret about my name and the Russians. Nine-tenths of what is attributed to me I never said, but I did say the Russians were coming, and that, too, on 31st of October, 1839, and come they did ; and Lord Auckland would never believe it till March, 1840 ! He heard from London and from Khiva of the failure simultaneously, and they wonder why we did not hear sooner. We have no mail coaches here, and hence the explanation. From Orenburg to London is eighteen days ; from Bokhara to Caubul is thirty. We have no intelligence yet of a second expedition, and I hope none will come. The state of Afghanistan for the last year will show you how much reason we had to fear the Czar's approach.'

After this the horizon was clear for a little space, and there was a lull in the political atmosphere. But with the new year came new troubles. There was a crisis at

Herat ; and the tribes in Western Afghanistan were rising against the King and his supporters. With these things Burnes had little to do in any active capacity. He wrote letters and minutes, and gave advice, clearly seeing that everything was going wrong. 'I am now a highly paid idler,' he wrote to one of his brothers, 'having no less than 3500 rupees a month, as Resident at Caubul, and being, as the lawyers call it, only counsel, and that, too, a dumb one—by which I mean that I give paper opinions, but do not work them out.' He had, however, become more contented with his lot. He ceased to chafe at what seemed, for a time at least, to be inevitable ; and enjoying, as best he could, the blessings of the present, he looked forward to a future, then apparently not very remote, when his energies might find freer scope for action, for it was believed that a higher official post would soon be found for Macnaghten. He was in excellent health at this time, and his fine animal spirits sparkled pleasantly in all his letters to his friends. On the 1st of April he wrote to Montrose, saying : 'We had no sooner got Dost Mahomed Khan into our power than Herat breaks with us, and the Punjab becomes a scene of strife. Out of both contingencies we might extract good—real, solid good ; we may restore the lost wings of Afghanistan, Herat and Peshawur, to Shah Soojah, and thus enable him to support himself, free us from the expense of Afghanistan, and what would be better, withdraw our regular army within the Indus, leaving Caubul as an outpost, which we could thus succour with readiness. . . . I lead, however, a very pleasant life, and if rotundity and heartiness be proofs of health, I have *them*. My house

I taboo at all hours for breakfast, which I have long made a public meal. I have covers laid for eight, and hait a dozen of the officers drop in as they feel disposed every morning, discuss a rare Scotch breakfast of smoked fish, salmon grills, devils, and jellies, puff away at their cigars till ten (the hour of assembly being nine), then I am left to myself till evening, when my friend Broadfoot (who is my assistant) and I sit down to our quiet dinner, and discuss with our Port men and manners. Once in every week I give a party of eight, and now and then I have my intimates alone, and as the good river Indus is a channel for luxuries as well as commerce, I can place before my friends at one-third in excess of the Bombay price my champagne, hock, madeira, sherry, port, claret, sauterne, not forgetting a glass of curaoa and maraschino, and the hermetically sealed salmon and horch-potch (veritable hotch-potch, all the way frae Aberdeen), for deuced good it is, the peas as big as if they had been soaked for *tristling*. I see James Duke is an alderman of London; he will be Lord Mayor, and then all the smacks of Montrose will flee to London with *fine young men* for his patronage. A Duke and a Mayor! These are wonderful changes, but I am glad of it, for he is said to be a real good fellow, and deserves his prosperity. I remember he used to sit before us in the Kirk, and in his hat were written, "Remember the eighth commandment and Golgotha," so he will be a terror to evil-doers assuredly. Bravo, say I. I wish I were provost myself here; I would be as happy as the Lord Mayor.'

It is not improbable that the enforced inactivity of which Alexander Burnes, at this period of his career, so often



wrote, was in one sense greatly to his advantage. It often happens that men who lead very active and stirring lives fail, in the midst of their day-to-day excitements, to take that just view of surrounding circumstances which they would have taken, with more leisure on their hands and better opportunities of far-reaching observation. We cannot 'see, as from a tower, the end of all,' when we are wrestling with a crowd at its base. Burnes, as a looker-on, saw clearly and distinctly what Macnaghten did not see—that we were interfering a great deal too much in Afghanistan, and that the best thing for the restored monarchy would be that we should take less trouble to support it. After an outbreak, fatally mismanaged by the Western Ghilzyes, he wrote to Major Lynch, in June, saying : ' I am not cognizant of all which you relate regarding affairs in your quarter, but I am sorry to tell you that I am one of those altogether opposed to any further fighting in this country, and that I consider we shall never settle Afghanistan at the point of the bayonet. And this opinion, which I have so long held, I am glad to see has been at length adopted in Calcutta, and will be our future guide. As regards the Ghilzyes, indeed, immense allowances ought to be made for them ; they were, till within three generations, the Kings of Afghanistan, and carried their victorious arms to the capital of Persia. It is expecting too much, therefore, to hope for their being at once peaceful subjects.' And again on the 1st of August, to another correspondent : ' Pottinger undertakes an awful risk in China. M'Neill ought not to go to Persia ; he deserves Constantinople, and I hope will get it. Lord Auckland will not pardon poor Todd, and here again I predicted

failure there, and am scowled at for being a true prophet ; but certes, if Herat has gone over to Persia we are in a greater mess than ever, but I hope the return of our ambassador to Persia will set all this right. For my part, I would send no one to Persia or to Herat ; I would withdraw all but two brigades within the Indus, and these I would withdraw, one in next year, and one in the year after next, and leave the Shah to his own contingent and his Afghans, and I, as Envoy, would stake my character on this—We shall be ruined if this expense goes on.'

At last, in this autumn of 1841, news came that Sir William Macnaghten had been appointed Governor of Bombay ; but, even then, there were reports that some veteran political officer would be sent up from the Provinces to occupy his seat. It was a period of distressing doubt and anxiety to the expectant minister. In the midst of his perplexities, he was wont to seek solace in his books. His favourite author was Tacitus, in whose writings he read lessons of wisdom, which, he said, were of infinite service to him in the practical affairs of life. Some extracts from the journal, which he kept in this year, will show how, in the enforced inactivity of his anomalous position, he gathered knowledge from his library, which he might, some day, he thought, turn to good account. At all events, such studies diverted his mind and alleviated the pains of the suspense to which he was condemned : 'Caubul, August 13. Read in the thirteenth and fourteenth books of the *Annals* of Tacitus. What lessons of wisdom and knowledge—how the human mind and its passions are laid bare ! I drink in Tacitus, and, perhaps, with the more relish, that his lessons

are of practical use——’ ‘August 19. Horace Walpole’s letters, how inimitable! He is only surpassed by Byron, of all letter-writers I have read; yet Walpole’s details of trifles, and trifling on details, are inimitable. I have got a grand edition, and eke out the six volumes, that I may enjoy it all to my full——’ ‘Aug. 24. Reading Sir Sidney Smith’s life. It supports an opinion of mine, that all great men have more or less charlatanerie——’ ‘Aug. 26. This is assuredly one of the idle stages in my life. I do nothing for the public, unless it be giving advice, but, as I have none to perform, unless it be to receive my 3500 rupees a month. At Bhooj, in 1829, I had similar idleness, and I improved myself. Again, in 1835, I was similarly situated, and since May, 1839, I have been so circumstanced here. I conclude that my pay is assigned to me for past conduct and duties; however, as my Lord Auckland is about to depart, I have little chance of being disturbed in my lair in his day; it may be otherwise. To study Tacitus is as pleasant as to write despatches——’ ‘Sept. 1. An expression from Macnaghten to-day that Shah Soojah was an old woman, not fit to rule his people, with divers other condemnations. Ay, see my *Travels*, and as far back as 1831—ten years ago. Still I look upon his fitness or unfitness as very immaterial; we are here to govern for him, and must govern——’ ‘Sept. 10. Somewhat contemplative. This is certainly an important time for me. Of supersession I have no fear, but those in power may still keep Macnaghten over me, and much as he objects to this, it enables Lord Auckland to move off, and evade his promises to me. Alas! I did not believe my first interview

with the long, tall, gaunt man on the couch at Bowood was to end thus——' 'Sept. 22. The Envoy is afraid of the King's health. A native predicts his death; he is not long-lived, I plainly see. If he dies, we were planning the *modus operandi*. I offered to go to Candahar, and bring up the new King Timour, and I predict he will make a good ruler. I question myself how far I am right in avoiding correspondence with Lord Lansdowne, Mr Elphinstone, and all my numerous friends in England, or even with Lord Auckland; yet I believe I am acting an honest part to Macnaghten and to Government, and yet neither the one nor the other, I fear, thank me; yet it is clear that if I had carried on a hot correspondence with Lord Auckland, as he wished me, I must have injured Macnaghten, and had I, in this correspondence, evaded those points on which his Lordship was interested, I should have injured myself in his eyes, and consequently as a public servant. In after days I hope to be able to applaud my own discretion in this my difficult position; but I may fail altogether by my honesty, though I have always found it the best policy——' 'Sept. 24. I have read with great relish and enjoyment the first volume of Warren Hastings's Life, and with great admiration for the man, founded on his many virtues and noble fortitude, and that, too, on the evidence of his letters, and not his biography——' 'October 16. I seem hourly to lose my anxiety for power and place; yet away with such feelings, for if I be worth anything, they ought to have no hold of me. I have just read in Guizot's *Life of Washington*: "In men who are worthy of the destiny (to govern), all weariness, all sadness, though it be warrantable,

is weakness ; their mission is toil ; their reward, the success of their works ; " but still in toil I shall become weary if employed. Will they venture, after all that has been promised, and all that I have done, to pass me over ? I doubt it much ; if so, the past will not fix a stain on me, and the future is dark and doubtful. I have been asking myself if I am altogether so well fitted for the supreme control here as I am disposed to believe. I sometimes think not, but I have never found myself fail in power when unshackled. On one point I am, however, fully convinced, I am unfit for the second place ; in it my irritation would mar all business, and in supersession there is evidently no recourse but England. I wish this doubt were solved, for anxiety is painful. One trait of my character is thorough seriousness ; I am indifferent about nothing I undertake—in fact, if I undertake a thing I cannot be indifferent.'

The anniversary of his arrival in India came round. Twenty years had passed since he had first set his foot on the strand of Bombay. Seldom altogether free from superstitions and presentiments, he entered upon this 31st of October, 1841, with a vivid impression that it would bring forth something upon which his whole future life would turn. ' Ay ! what will this day bring forth ? ' he wrote in his journal, ' the anniversary of my twenty years' service in India. It will make or mar me, I suppose. Before the sun sets I shall know whether I go to Europe or succeed Macnaghten.' But the day passed, and the momentous question was not settled. Then November dawned, and neither Burnes nor Macnaghten received the desired letters from Calcutta—only vague newspaper reports, which added

new fuel to the doubts and anxieties of the expectant Envoy. 'I grow very tired of praise,' he wrote in his journal, 'and I suppose that I shall get tired of censure in time.' This was his last entry. There was no more either of praise or of censure to agitate him in this world. Already the bitter fruit of folly and injustice had ripened upon the tree of Retribution, and the nation which had done this wrong thing was about to be judged by the 'eternal law, that where crime is, sorrow shall answer it.' The Afghans are an avaricious and a revengeful people. Our only settled policy in Afghanistan was based upon the faith that by gratifying the one passion we might hold the other in control. So money was spent freely in Afghanistan. We bought safety and peace. But when it was found that this enormous expenditure was impoverishing our Indian Empire, and that the Afghans were still crying 'Give—give!' we were driven upon the unpopular necessity of retrenchment, and it ceased to be worth the while of the people to tolerate our occupation of the country. First one tribe and then another rose against us; and at last the people at the capital began to bestir themselves. Already, on the 1st of November, were the streets of Caubul seething with insurrection, and the house of Sir Alexander Burnes was in the city perilously exposed to attack. His Afghan servants told him that he was in danger, and exhorted him to withdraw to the cantonments. He said that he had done the Afghans no injury; why, then, should they injure him? He could not think that any real danger threatened him, and he retired to rest at night with little fear of the results of the morrow. Little fear I should write, of his own

personal safety ; but he saw with sufficient distinctness that a great national crisis was approaching. When, on that evening, his moonshee, Mohun Lal, who had accompanied him for many years in his wanderings, warned him of the approaching danger, he rose from his chair, and made what to his faithful assistant appeared an 'astonishing speech,' to the effect that the time had arrived for the English to leave the country.\* But he could not be induced to adopt any precautions. He said that if he sent for a guard to protect his house, it would seem as though he were afraid.

\* I give Mohun Lal's own words, which are all the more interesting for the eccentricities of the phraseology : 'On the 1st of November,' he wrote to Mr Colvin, private secretary to the Governor-General, 'I saw Sir Alexander Burnes, and told him that the confederacy has been grown very high, and we should fear the consequence. He stood up from his chair, sighed, and said, he knows nothing but the time has arrived that we should leave this country.' In a letter to Dr James Burnes, there is a similar statement, with the addition that, upon the same night, an Afghan chief, named Taj Mahomed, called upon Burnes, to no purpose, with a like warning. 'On the first of November I saw him at evening, and informed him, according to the conversation of Mahomed Meerza Khan, our great enemy, that the chiefs are contriving plans to stand against us, and therefore it will not be safe to remain without a sufficient guard in the city. He replied that if he were to ask the Envoy to send him a strong guard, it will show that he was fearing ; and at the same (time) he made an astonishing speech, by saying that the time is not far when we must leave this country. Taj Mahomed, son of Gholam Mahomed Khan, the Youranee chief, came at night to him, and informed what the chiefs intended to do, but he turned him out under the pretended aspect that we do not care for such things. Our old friend, Nailb Sheriff, came and asked him to allow his son, with one hundred men, to remain day and night in his place, till the Ghilzye affair is settled, but he did not agree.'

So Alexander Burnes laid himself down to rest; and slept. But with the early morrow came the phantoms of new troubles. Plainly the storm was rising. First one, then another, with more or less authority, came to warn him that there was 'death in the pot.' The first, who called before daybreak, was not admitted, and Burnes slept on. But when the Afghan minister, Oosman Khan, came to the house, the servants woke their master, who rose and dressed himself, and went forth to receive the Wuzeer. It was no longer possible to look with incredulity upon the signs and symptoms around him. The streets were alive with insurgents. An excited crowd was gathering round his house. Still there might be time to secure safety by flight. But vainly did Oosman Khan implore Burnes to accompany him to the cantonments. He scorned to quit his post; he believed that he could quell the tumult; and so he rejected the advice that might have saved him.

That the city was in a state of insurrection was certain; but it appeared that a prompt and vigorous demonstration on the part of the British troops in cantonments might quell the tumult; so he wrote to Macnaghten for support, and to some friendly Afghan chiefs for assistance. It was then too late. Before any succour could arrive, the crowd before his house had begun to rage furiously, and it was plain that the insurgents were thirsting for the blood of the English officers. From a gallery which ran along the upper part of the house, Burnes, attended by his brother Charles, and his friend William Broadfoot, addressed himself to the excited mob. They yelled out their execration and defiance in reply, and it was plain that no expostula-



tions or entreaties could turn them aside from their purpose. The enemy had begun to fire upon them, and, hopeless as retaliation and resistance might be, there seemed to be nothing left to the English officers but to sell their lives as dearly as they could. Broadfoot was soon shot dead. Then the insurgents set fire to Burnes's stables, rushed into his garden, and summoned him to come down. All hope of succour from cantonments had now gone. Still he might purchase his own and his brother's safety by appealing to the national avarice of the Afghans. He offered them large sums of money if they would suffer him to escape. Still they called upon him to leave off firing and to come down to the garden. At last he consented, and the brothers, conducted by a Cashmeree Mussulman, who had sworn to protect them, went down to the garden; but no sooner were they in the presence of the mob than their guide cried out, 'Here is Sekundur Burnes!' And straightway the insurgents fell upon them and slew them.

And so, on the 2nd of November, 1841, fell Alexander Burnes, butchered by an Afghan mob. He was only thirty-six years of age. That he was a remarkable man, and had done remarkable things, is not to be doubted. He was sustained, from first to last, by that great enthusiasm, of which Sir John Malcolm has spoken, as the best security for a successful Indian career. He was of an eager, impulsive, romantic temperament; but he had a sufficiency of good strong practical sense to keep him from running into any dangerous excesses. He had courage of a high order; sagacity, penetration, and remarkable quickness of observation. It has been said of him that he was unstable,

that his opinions were continually shifting, and that what he said on one day he often contradicted on the next. The fact is, that he was singularly unreserved and outspoken, and was wont to set down in his correspondence with his familiar friends all the fleeting impressions of an active and imaginative mind. But on great questions of Central-Asian policy he was not inconsistent. The confusion was in the minds of others, not in his own mind. He had strong opinions, which he never ceased to express, so long as it was possible to give them practical effect ; but, overruled by higher authority, and another course of policy substituted for that which he would have pursued, he consented to act, in a ministerial or executive capacity, for the furtherance of the great object of national safety which he believed might have been better attained in another way. When he found that his views were not the views of the Government which he served, he offered to withdraw from the scene in favour of some more appreciative agent ; but he was told that his services were needed, so he consented to work against the grain.\* I have already expressed my

\* Burnes often stated this very distinctly in his correspondence, and was very anxious that it should be clearly known and remembered. I give the following, from a letter written at the end of 1839, because it is one of his most emphatic utterances on the subject, and contains also a passage on his increased sense of responsibility, written in a more solemn strain than the general bulk of his correspondence : ' All my implorations to Government to act with promptitude and decision had reference to doing something when Dost Mahomed was King, and all this they have made to appear in support of Shah Soojah being set up ! But again, I did advocate the setting up of Shah Soojah, and lent all my aid, name, and knowledge to do it. But when was this ? When my advice had been

believe that in so doing he did what was right. Doubtless he had his failings, as all men have. But he died young. And I am inclined to think that, if his life had been spared, he would have attained to much higher distinction, for all that he lacked to qualify him for offices of large responsibility was a greater soberness of judgment, which years would almost certainly have brought. As it was, few men have achieved, at so early an age, so much distinction, by the force of their own personal character, as was achieved by Alexander Burnes.

rejected, and the Government were fairly stranded. I first gave opinions, and then asked leave to withdraw. But Lord Auckland proved to me that it would be desertion at a critical moment, and I saw so myself, but I entered up on the support of his policy not as what was best, but what was best under the circumstances which a series of blunders had produced. To have acted otherwise must have been to make myself superior to the Governor General, and I saw that I had a duty to my country, all its representatives of that country in India had behaved to me, and I bore and forbore in consequence. My life has been devoted to my country, like creeping things, I may have in the outset looked only to personal advantages, but persons have long since given place to things, I now feel myself, at the age of thirty five, with an onerous load upon me—the holy and sacred interests of nations, and much as men may envy me, I begin sometimes to tremble at the giddy eminence I have already attained. In some respects it is indeed not to be envied, and I only hope that no passion may turn me from the path I tread, and that I may feel the awful responsibility which I have brought upon myself.

## CAPTAIN ARTHUR CONOLLY.

[BORN 1807.—DIED 1842.]

**I**F the reader, who has followed me through the preceding chapters, remembering what I have written about the characters and the careers of Alexander Burnes and Henry Martyn, can conceive the idea of a man combining in his own person all that was excellent and loveable in both, and devoting his life to the pursuit of the objects which each in his turn sought to attain, the image of Arthur Conolly will stand in full perfection before him. For in him the high courage and perseverance of the explorer were elevated and sublimed by the holy zeal and enthusiasm of the apostle. Ready to dare everything and to suffer everything in a good cause; full of faith, and love, and boundless charity, he strove without ceasing for the glory of God and for the good of his fellow-men; and in little things and in great, in the daily interests of a gentle life, in which the human affections were never dormant, and in the stern necessities of public service, which for the honour of the nation, for the good of the human race, and for the glory of the religion which he professed and acted, demanded from him the surrender even of that life itself,

manifested all the noblest self-abnegation of the Hero and the Martyr.

Arthur Conolly was the third of the six sons of a gentleman, who, in the latter part of the eighteenth century, went out to India, made a rapid fortune, and returned to spend it in ease and comfort at home. He was born in Portland-place, London, in the year 1807; and received his education at Rugby. He was not much happier there than was Henry Martyn at the Truro Grammar School. Shy and sensitive, and of a nature too refined to cope successfully with the rough realities of public school life, he was not happy there; and he often spoke in after-life of the sufferings he endured at 'Mother Bucknell's.' In good time, however, deliverance came.\* He was removed

\* That all this made a strong impression on his mind—an impression which was never effaced—may be gathered from a passage in a letter which he wrote to one of his brothers in 1840, with reference to the education of a son: 'I don't feel anxious to hear,' wrote Arthur, 'that he has been sent to England for his education, for, judging by the majority of young men who are driven through our schools and colleges from their earliest youth upwards, the system of turning boys out from the affectionately constraining influences of their own homes, as soon as they can run, does not produce the most desirable fruits. . . . Under his first instructors, a boy works rather from fear than from esteem, and is prevented from thinking for himself, whilst the religion which should be his mainspring is performed before him as a task for mornings and evenings and twice o' Sundays. Societies of little boys certainly teach each other the meannesses which they would learn at home, and as for the knowledge of the world, on which so much stress is laid, it is commonly got by young men through channels which greatly diminish the value of the acquisition. These opinions would make me retain a son as long as possible under what Scripture beautifully terms "the commandment of his father

from Rugby in 1822, and sent to the Military Seminary of the East India Company. His father had large 'interest at the India House,' especially with the Marjoribanks family; so in due course, one after the other, he sent all his boys to India.

Arthur, in the first instance, was designed for one of the scientific branches of the Indian Army, and was sent, therefore, to the Company's Military Seminary. But whilst at Addiscombe,\* an offer having been made to him of a commission in the Bengal Cavalry, he accepted it, or it was accepted for him. He left the military seminary on the 7th of May, 1823, and on the 16th of June he quitted England in a vessel bound for Calcutta. There was so much of incident crowded into the latter years of his life, that it is necessary to pass briefly over the chapter of his boyish years.

The ship in which he sailed for India was the Company's

and the law of his mother," even if his home were in England, that he might be kept unspotted from the world, which is the great thing for the happiness of this life as well as for the next.' And he added: 'I hope he is learning to read and write Hindustani, if not Persian. He will find such knowledge of immense advantage to him, if he ever comes out here; and if he does not, an induction into Oriental idioms will enrich his mother tongue.'

\* As this is the first mention, in the pages of this work, of the old Military Seminary, near Croydon, which was once the nursery of so many heroes, I should not have passed over it without notice, if I had not thought that it would receive fitter illustration in the Memoir which next follows. Arthur Conolly can hardly be regarded as an 'Addiscombe man,' as he never completed the course of education, but went out to India with what was called a 'direct appointment.'

ship *Grenville*, which carried Reginald Heber, then newly consecrated Bishop of Calcutta, to his diocese. In those days, the first voyage to India of a young writer or a young cadet often exercised an important influence over his whole after-career. Life-long friendships were often made or abiding impressions fixed upon the mind by the opportunities of a life on board ship. It was no small thing for a youth of sixteen, ardent, imaginative, with a vast capacity for good in his nature, to sit daily at the feet of such a man as Bishop Heber. The Bishop has recorded, in one of his letters, the fact that when he was studying the Persian and Hindostanee languages, 'two of the young men on board showed themselves glad to read with him.' Arthur Conolly was one of the two. But he derived better help than this from his distinguished fellow-passenger. The seed of the Word, which then came from the Sower's hand, fell upon good ground and fructified a hundred-fold. In a letter to a friend, Heber wrote, some five weeks after the departure of the *Grenville*: 'Here I have an attentive audience. The exhibition is impressive and interesting, and the opportunities of doing good considerable.' Among his most attentive hearers was young Arthur Conolly, who took to his heart the great truths which were offered to him, and became from that time rooted and grounded in the saving faith.

The first years of his residence in India did not differ greatly from those of the generality of young military officers, who have their profession to learn in the first instance, and in the next to qualify themselves for independent employment. He was attached, as a cornet, to the 6th

Regiment of Bengal Cavalry, and in 1824 and the two following years was stationed first at Keitah, and then at Lohargong. In 1825 he obtained his lieutenancy; and in 1827 he fell sick, and was compelled to obtain a furlough to England on medical certificate.

After a year and a half spent in Europe, he was sufficiently recruited to think of returning to India. In those days, it was the ordinary course for an officer, 'permitted to return to his duty,' to take a passage in a sailing vessel, steering round the Cape of Good Hope. What is now called somewhat inappropriately the Overland Route, was not then open for passenger-traffic; and if it had been, it would not have held out much attraction to Arthur Conolly. He desired to return to India really by the Overland Route—that is, by the route of Russia and Persia; and, as he has himself declared, 'the journey was undertaken upon a few days' resolve.' 'Quitting London,' he has recorded in the published account of his travels, 'on the 10th of August, 1829, I travelled through France and the North of Germany to Hamburg, and embarking on board a steam-vessel at Travemunden on the 1st of September, sailed up the Baltic and the Gulf of Finland in four days to St Petersburg.' Such is the first sentence of the two volumes of travels which Arthur Conolly has given to the world. From St Petersburg he travelled to Moscow, and thence onwards to Tiflis, whence he journeyed forward across the Persian frontier and halted at Tabreez.

It was his original intention, after having reached this  
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place, to strike down thence to the shores of the Persian Gulf, and there to take ship for Bombay. But the spirit of adventure within him grew stronger as he proceeded on his journey, and he determined to explore at least some portions of Central Asia. There was little known, in those days, about Afghanistan. He might do good service by acquiring information respecting the countries lying between Persia and India, and it suited his humour at that time to make the effort. It was the enterprise of the Englishman more than anything else which carried him forward in those early days. He was very young when he started on his journey. He had numbered only twenty-two years; but he had courage and self-reliance of the highest order; and ever as he went, the desire to see more impelled him forward to new fields of adventure. Perhaps there was even then obscurely taking shape within him some previsions of the 'great game in Central Asia,' which he afterwards believed it was the especial privilege of Great Britain to play.

The winter was spent pleasantly at Tabreez, where the British Mission, of which Sir John Macdonald was then the chief, was located; and in the early spring of 1830, having received good encouragement and offers of valuable assistance from the minister, he made his preparation for a march to Teheran, from which place he purposed to attempt a journey, either by way of Khiva, Bokhara, and Caubul, or through Khorassan and Afghanistan, to the Indus. 'I had the good fortune,' he said, 'to engage as my companion Syud Keramut Ali, an unprejudiced, very clever, and gentlemanly native of Hindostan, who had re-

sided many years in Persia, and was held in great esteem by the English there. I had afterwards much reason to congratulate myself upon having so agreeable a companion, and it was chiefly owing to his assistance that I safely completed my journey.'

Starting from Teheran on the 6th of April, the travellers made their way through Mazenderan to Astrabad, which they reached before the end of the month. There Conolly determined to attempt the route to Khiva. 'Thinking it necessary,' he said, 'to have a pretence for our journey, I assumed the character of a merchant; the Syud was to call himself my partner, and we purchased for the Khiva markets red silk scarfs, Kerman shawls, furs, and some huge bags of pepper, ginger, and other spices.' This he afterwards confessed was a mistake, for as he did not play the part of a merchant adroitly, the disguise caused suspicion to alight upon him. What befell the travellers among the Toorkomans, Conolly has himself narrated in the first volume of his published narrative—how they crossed the Goorgaon and the Attruck rivers, and rode into the desert with their pretended merchandise on camel-back; how they fell into the hands of thieves, who, under pretence of protecting them, robbed them of all that they had got; how they narrowly escaped being murdered, or sold into hopeless captivity; and how at last they obtained deliverance by the opportune arrival of a party of Persian merchants, with whom they returned in safety to Asterabad. He went back *re infectâ*, but he had spent nearly a month among the Toorkomans, and had penetrated nearly half way to Khiva, and seen more of the country than any European

had seen before, or—with one exception, I believe—has ever visited since.

After a brief sojourn at Asterabad, Arthur Conolly, attended by Keramut Ali, travelled to Meshed, by the way of Subzawur and Nisharpoor. At the holy city he was detained, money-bound, until the middle of September, when he started, in the trail of an Afghan army under the command of Yar Mahomed, for Herat, the Afghan city which afterwards became so celebrated in Eastern history. Upon all with whom he was associated there the young English officer made a most favourable impression. Another young English officer—Eldred Pottinger—who visited the city some years afterwards, found that Arthur Conolly's name was great in Herat, and that many held him in affectionate remembrance. 'I fell in,' says the former in his journal, referring to the year 1838, 'with a number of Captain Conolly's acquaintances. Every person asked after him, and appeared disappointed when I told them I did not know him. In two places, I crossed Mr Conolly's route, and on his account received the greatest hospitality and attention—indeed, more than was pleasant, for such liberality required corresponding liberality upon my part, and my funds were not well adapted for any extraordinary demand upon them. In Herat, Mr Conolly's fame was great. In a large party where the subject of the Europeans who had visited Herat was mooted, Conolly's name being mentioned, I was asked if I knew him, and on replying, "Merely by report," Moollah Mahomed, a Sheeah Moollah of great eminence, calling to me across the room, said, 'You have a great pleasure awaiting you. When you see

him, give him my salutation, and tell him that I say he has done as much to give the English nation fame in Herat as your ambassador, Mr Elphinstone, at Peshawur," and in this he was seconded by the great mass present.'

This was truly a great distinction for one so young; and it was earned, not at all as some later travellers in Mahomedan countries have earned distinction, by assuming disguises and outwardly apostatizing, but by the frankest possible assertion of the character of a Christian gentleman. Moreover, he appeared before the Heratees as a very poor one. He did not go among the Afghans as Elphinstone had gone among them, laden with gifts; but as one utterly destitute, seeking occasional small loans to help him on his way. Yet even in these most disadvantageous circumstances, the nobility of his nature spoke out most plainly; and the very Moollahs, with whom he contended on behalf of his religion, were fain to help him as though he had been one of their sect. He had many warm disputations with these people, and they seem to have honoured him all the more for bravely championing his faith. Young as he was, he felt that our national character had suffered grievously in the eyes of the people of the East by our neglect of the observances of our religion. 'I am sure,' he said, 'the bulk of the Mahomedans in this country do not believe that the Feringhees have any real religion. They hear from their friends, who visit India, that we eat abominations, and are never seen to pray; and they care not to inquire more about us. . . . It is, therefore, greatly to be desired that such translations of our Scriptures as may invite their study should be sent among these people, in order first to satisfy

them that we have a religion, and secondly that they may know what our religion is; in order that they may learn to respect us, which they do not now, and gradually to regard us with kindlier feelings; for until they do, we shall in vain attempt to propagate the Gospel among them;’ and then he proceeded to discourse very shrewdly and intelligently on some of the principal errors which had been committed by our people in their efforts to propagate the Christian faith—errors principally arising from our ignorance or disregard of the national characters of those whom we had endeavoured to instruct in the truths of the Gospel.

From Herat, Arthur Conolly proceeded, by the route of Ghirisk, to Candahar; and thence by the valley of Pisheen, in which he halted for some time, to Quettah, and through the Bolan Pass to the country of the Ameers of Sindh. He then journeyed to Bahwulpore and across the great Indian Desert, to the British frontier, which he crossed in the month of January, 1831. At Delhi he met the Governor-General, Lord William Bentinck, to whom he gave an account of his wanderings, and afterwards dropped down to Calcutta by the river route. At the Presidency he drew up an interesting paper on the subject of the ‘Overland Invasion of India,’ which he printed in one of the Calcutta journals, and afterwards appended to his published travels. In those days, a paper on such a subject showing any real knowledge of the countries traversed was a novelty; but it was reserved for a later generation to discern the large amount of sagacity that informed it.

During the greater part of this year Conolly was em-

played in arranging the information which he had collected in the course of his travels—work in which he was assisted by Mr Charles Trevelyan, then a young civilian of high promise, who drew up some joint reports with him, which appear to have been prepared partly at Delhi and partly at Meerut, from which latter place the young cavalry officer went to Kurnaul. Even at that time it was plain that nothing had made so strong an impression on the traveller's mind as the knowledge which he had obtained of the abominable man-stealing, slave-dealing practices of the Toorkoman tribes, and the misery which this vile trade inflicted upon the people of Central Asia. He saw, too, under what strong provocation Russia was labouring, and how impossible it was, with any show of reason and justice, to deny her right to push forward to the rescue of her enslaved people, and the chastisement of the States which had swept them off and sold them into slavery. 'The case of these people,' he said, 'is deplorable, and in the midst of that laudable sympathy which has been excited in this country for the condition of slaves in general, it cannot be doubted that the wretched captives who languish in the steppes of Tartary will have their share, although their situation be unhappily beyond the hope of relief; and however important it may be to check the dangerous ambition of a too aspiring nation, humanity will be inclined to wish success to the Russian cause, were it but to put a period to a system so replete with barbarity as the trade in captives at Khiva.' He was far in advance of his age when he wrote in this strain; for it was not the fashion in those days, or indeed for more than a quarter of a century afterwards, to

look upon Russia as any other than an unscrupulous aggressor, driven onward by lust of conquest, and eager to contend with England for the mastery of Hindostan.

But the ardent philanthropist was only a regimental subaltern. It was soon time for Lieutenant Conolly to return to his military duties, so he rejoined his regiment; and, after a while, at Cawnpore, made the acquaintance of the famous missionary traveller, Joseph Wolff. 'They took sweet counsel together, and they walked in the House of the Lord as friends.' With what deep emotion has Wolff recorded his recollections of that meeting! 'From Delhi,' he says, 'I passed to Agra, and thence to various places until I reached Cawnpore. **HERE I MET WITH LIEUTENANT CONOLLY.**' The words are printed in Wolff's book in capital letters, as I have printed them here. 'When I travelled first in Khorassaun, in the year 1831,' he continues, 'I heard at Meshed by the Jews, that an English traveller had preceded me there, by the name of Arthur Conolly. They described him as a man who lived in the fear of God and of religion. The moment I arrived he took me to his house, and not only showed me the greatest hospitality, but, as I was at that time short of money, he gave me every assistance in his power—and not only so—he revised my journal for me with the most unaffected kindness. He also collected the Mahomedan Moollahs to his house, and permitted me not only to discuss with them the subject of religion, but gave me most substantial aid in combating their arguments. Conolly was a man possessed of a deep Scriptural knowledge; a capital textuary. Various enemies are always found to attack the lone missionary. Nobly and

well did this gallant soldier acquit himself in the church militant, both in deeds of arms and deep devotion to the cause of Christ.\* What Arthur Conolly on his part thought of his friend may be gathered from a letter written by him shortly after his departure from Cawnpore. 'Wolff

\* A friend who was then at Cawnpore, writing to me of this period of Conolly's history, says: '... An acquaintance, which ripened into mutual regard and esteem, began in an odd way, and was improved by an odd man. I was very much charmed with his singing, and he was taken with my playing, on which he made the discovery that he had never been taught, and I had never learnt notes; and while I was indebted to an enthusiastic bellows-blower in Chichester Cathedral, who, for sixpence a week, allowed me to operate on the old organ therein, and used to predict no end of future fame, he, too, had been encouraged by some old nurse to believe that he was a cherub, and would beat Braham yet. The odd man was Joseph Wolff. . . . When Wolff paid Conolly a visit at Cawnpore, I was a good deal with them, and joined in their laughter. Yes, there was a good deal of laughing. Wolff was both untidy and uncleanly, and yet not unwilling to be reformed, and so, at or before breakfast, ran the lesson. From Arthur Conolly to him: "Peer Moorshid, have we put on the clean stockings?" Then next, "Have we used the sponge and chillumchee?" (basin.) To all of which Wolff would make good-humoured reply, adding, "Truly ye are all sons of Eezak!" Yet there was real love in that laughing. Wolff's love and admiration of Arthur Conolly were unbounded. He could, too, break out into lofty discourse, and Arthur Conolly held his own with him. I never can forget one Sabbath conversation on the Jews, protracted till it was time for us all to go to church together, when Wolff preached on the subject—The Jews, think how great were their privileges; Christian Englishmen, think how great are your privileges. When Wolff, in after years, went to Bokhara, and spoke of Arthur Conolly as his "moreed"—as I confidently recollect he did, though I cannot lay hold of the narrative—I feel assured his mind often went back to those days at Cawnpore.



has left us,' wrote the young Christian enthusiast on the 19th of February, 1833, 'and has taken with him the esteem and best wishes of all who knew him. As you will shortly see him in Calcutta, I need not enter into much detail of his sayings and doings here, but let me again assure you that he is neither crazy, vain, nor fantastical, but a simple-minded, humble, rational, and sound Christian. His chief desire is to preach to all people, Jesus Christ *crucified*, the God, and only Saviour of mankind: he is naturally most anxious that his own brethren should turn to the light that has shone upon him, and therefore he seeks them in all parts of the earth where God's wrath has scattered them, but ever as he goes, he proclaims to the Mahomedan, and to the idolater, the great object of his mission. On his opinions concerning the personal reign of our Saviour on earth during the Millennium, I am not qualified to pass judgment, but I believe he has chiefly formed them upon a *literal* interpretation of the yet to be fulfilled prophecies, especially those contained in the 72nd Psalm and the 60th Isaiah. . . . And after all, though he is most decided in his creed, he says: "I am no inspired prophet, and I may err in my calculations and conclusions, but the book from which I deduce them cannot be wrong—search into its meanings, as you are commanded, with prayer and humble diligence, and then decide according to the understanding that God has given you; I ask not that you should accept my words, but that you should inquire diligently into those which contain the assurance of 'a blessing to those who read and keep them,'" Rev. i. 3. If this be madness, I wish he would bite me. In his English discourses, 'Wolff's labours

under ignorance of idioms and select expressions, and finds difficulty in well embodying and connecting the thoughts that crowd upon him, yet it is always a pleasure to hear him, for often when struggling with the words of a big sentence, he throws out a few thrillingly beautiful expressions that give light to the rest, and at times it is quite wonderful how he rises with the grandeur of his theme, and finds an uninterrupted flow of fine language. He was very clear and forcible in his exposition of the 51st Psalm, and the 9th of Acts, and the Sunday morning before he left us, he preached a homily upon Paul's address to King Agrippa, which we all felt to be sublimely beautiful throughout. . . . Judging by the benefit we have reaped from his conversation here, we may hope that he will be made the means of doing much good wherever he goes. You will be delighted with his company in private society, for he is full of varied and most interesting anecdote; but, above all, I hope you will hear him when he appears to the greatest advantage in the pulpit, for understanding the Hebrew meanings of words in Scripture, he throws new light upon passages that are familiar to us, but chiefly he preaches truth *from the heart*, and therefore, generally, *to the heart*.

At Cawnpore, Arthur Conolly corresponded with Alexander Burnes, who had accomplished his great journey, and was then reaping his reward. Conolly had been the first to acquire and to place on record the much-needed information relating to the country between India and Persia; but he had been slow to make his appearance before the English public, and the Bombay officer had been rising into eminence, whilst his comrade of Bengal was still al-

most unknown. Conolly rejoiced in the success of his brother-traveller, and, without the slightest tinge of jealousy upon his feelings, wrote to congratulate Burnes on his achievements. 'Although,' he wrote on the 20th of April, 1833, 'I may be one of the last to congratulate you upon the happy accomplishment of your journey, I beg you not to rank me amongst the least sincere, for I really compliment you upon the resolution which has carried you through the most difficult as well as the most interesting part of Central Asia, and trust that you will derive as much honour and benefit from your travels, as we doubtless shall instruction and amusement. I meant to write to you at Bombay, but hearing that you were coming round to Calcutta, I determined there to address my congratulations, and some remarks upon certain matters in which you are interested. First, I owe you an explanation of a circumstance which, if I did not describe it, might possibly induce you to entertain what was, I believe, the Governor-General's opinion—that I wished feloniously to appropriate your valuable survey of the Indus. When in Calcutta, I drew up for his Lordship a map of the countries lying between the Arras and Indus, the Aral and Indian Ocean, which, being compiled at the Surveyor-General's office from the best authorities, contained the Indus as laid down by you. In this I sketched my route from Meshed to Buhawalpore, correcting the error that appeared in my protraction by the *Bukkur* of your map. When I had written out my journal for the press, I wrote to head-quarters to know whether I might send a copy of the above-mentioned map to England to be published with my book, and I especially begged to know

whether there existed objections to my using that portion of it which had been copied from your survey. I addressed myself to my relation, Mr Macnaghten, the secretary, and our mutual friend Trevelyan answered for him, in a note which I am sure he will not object to my enclosing. In consequence of its contents, I sent home to the Geographical Society, in London, as much of the map as embraced my route, copying into it from your survey a *hit* of the river about *Bukkur*, so as to place that point correctly, and mentioning that I had so done; there anticipating that a full and correct copy would be furnished me for my book. I wrote a preface to the last, in which I offered you my poor thanks for the benefit I thought to borrow from your labours. Objections were made at the Surveyor-General's office to completing the map without specific instructions from head-quarters. I wrote for these, and the Governor-General being up the country, I was occupied in alternate correspondence with his Lordship's and the Vice-Resident's secretaries for about two months, at the end of which time it was notified to me that I might use every part of the map in question except that part which had been laid down by you. I had then only to regret that I had lost so much time in consequence of his Lordship's opinion not having been correctly ascertained in the first instance, and to cancel that part of my preface which made mention of you. In this particular instance I could not see much danger of acting wrong, as I was informed that *Government* would very shortly publish a map containing *all* the latest information; but I would in no case have borrowed information from you, had I thought that you would object to my

doing so with due acknowledgment of my obligations. I do not now apprehend that you will hold me guilty of any evil intention, but it is proper that I should explain the circumstance, and beg your excuse for any error with which you may deem me chargeable. . . . I have before me your long and kind letter, dated on the Ravee, January 26, 1832, since when you have made a grand tour. You were right in supposing that I would willingly have undertaken such a trip with you, but, as you so well foresaw, there were several objections to my doing so. The notes, for which you so politely thanked me, were, I fear, too slight to have served you much, but they were heartily at your service, as are all those which I have collected for publication. Permit me to offer you these, with the sketch of my route, and the slightly altered country through which it runs. The map which contains it, you will get at the Surveyor-General's office, and my relation, Mr Macnaghten, now Political Secretary, will procure for you a copy of the roughly-printed pages which I sent home for Mr Murray to publish. From them you may glean a few particulars which will enable you to prove, or to complete, some of your notes, and I beg that you will make the freest use of all. 'Tis late to thank you for the good wishes and kind encouragement contained in your precedingly-mentioned letter, but you have not been travelling upon post roads, and must, therefore, accept my present acknowledgments. Several untoward circumstances have conspired to keep me without the pale of the Sirkar's patronage, and my wisest plan, I believe, would be to fold up my carpet of hope, and betake myself to a quiet whiff at the pipe of resignation.

but I am at heart too much of a vagabond to do this, and trust yet to pitch a tent among some of our long-bearded friends of the mountains.'

But these anticipations of continued neglect were soon falsified. In 1834, Lieutenant Conolly went with his regiment to Mhow, and soon afterwards he was transferred to that great outlet for the energies of aspiring young soldiers, kept down by the seniority system—the Political Department. He was appointed an assistant to the Governor-General's agent in Rajpootana. He was consoled at the same time by receipt of intelligence from England assuring him that his book had been published, and had been well received by the critics and by the public. Burnes sent him some cuttings from the literary journals to show how well his fellow-traveller had been reviewed—an attention which Conolly gratefully acknowledged in a letter, which is interesting on many other accounts. Writing from the Sambhur Lake, May 30, 1835, he said: 'Pray accept my sincere thanks for your welcome letter of the 11th instant, containing Monsieur D'AVEGA's secret and confidential notice of the honours designed for us by the Geographical Society of Paris. I must endeavour, in my letter of thanks to this liberal and enlightened body, to atone for not having at first presented a copy of my book to them. It was very kind of you to do this for me, according to the hint by which I could not otherwise have profited, and I have to thank you for this friendly act as one of a series for which I am your debtor. I did not answer your London letters, because you talked of returning to me almost immediately; but you may be sure that I was

gratified by the periodical notices of my work, which you were so good as to send me. They came like rays of sunshine after a cloud! There could be little doubt of your success; but as it has been hardly equalled, I may offer you my congratulations upon it. I think you did right in declining the Secretaryship to his Majesty's Embassy in Irân, because Mr Elphinstone advised you, and I hope that he saw a better field for you in Caubul or Bokhara. The attention of the home authorities has, after a long dream, been awakened to the state of their politics in Persia, and the appointment of Lord Heytesbury to the Governor-Generalship induces me to believe that British interests will no longer be neglected in Central Asia. Your fortune, of course, is not dependent upon the retention or abolition of what is termed the non-interference system with regard to our foreign affairs; you may speedily rise here to a higher station than the one above-mentioned, but, for my own part, I would rather be secretary of Embassy in Persia than the greatest magnate in any part of this *consuming* clime. It does, indeed, try both body and mind. I speak feelingly on this subject just now, for I am living in a tent on the border of the famed Salt Lake of Sambhur, ceded to us after the Joudpore war, in order that Lord William might be styled "the fountain of grace and bounty." As assistant to the Governor-General's agent in Rajpootana, I am residing here in the joint capacities of Hakim and Bunneeah, and as everything is yet in confusion and ruin, I am as hardly worked and as badly fed as Sancho was in Barrataria. The last advices from Loodianah state that Runjeet was about to close with the Afghans. I fear that

he will get the better of them somehow or other. Shah Soojah is in the Sikh camp. I hear the Maharajah has promised to make him King of Peshawur. Thus far may the troops of the Royal Cyclops advance their standards, but they will not be able to hold ground farther west: so thinks my esteemed friend Syud Keramut Ali, who has lately returned from Caubul, and who gives me very interesting accounts of the state in which he left the Caubul Sirdars. The Syud advised Jubbar Khan to send his eldest son to India for an English education. Captain Wade discovered a political mystery lying deep under this specious pretext, and after some quarrels which occurred in consequence, my friend, as the weakest party, went to the wall. I hope, however, to be able to show that all the differences had rise in mistakes. He at present stands condemned upon an *ipse dixit*, according to the equitable system by which whites judge blacks. I have requested my Calcutta agent to send you a copy of my book—a compliment which I could not sooner pay, and which I hope you will accept as a mark of my high esteem.'

In the performance of his political and other duties, Arthur Conolly worked on, until, in the month of January, 1838, he obtained a furlough to England. He did not go home because he was sick, or because he was weary of Indian life, but because he was drawn thither by the attractions of one to whom he had given the best affections of his heart. He had ever, in words which I find in one of his own letters, with reference to the character of a friend, a great *besoin d'aimer*—and he had found one worthy to fill the void. He had met in India a young lady, the



daughter of a man in high position there, a member of a noble family; and he had given to her all the love of his warm, passionate nature. But she had returned to England with her parents; and so he followed thither, believing, as he had good reason to believe, that their reunion would soon be followed by their marriage.

They met again, under her father's roof; and for a while he was supremely happy. But the fond hopes which he had cherished were doomed to bitter disappointment. The blight which fell upon the life of Henry Martyn fell also upon the life of Arthur Conolly. The whole history of it lies before me as written by himself, but it is not a history to be publicly related. There was no fault on either side. Nothing more is to be said of it than that it was God's will. And no man ever bowed himself more resignedly or reverentially to such a dispensation. He had been resolved for her sake to sacrifice his career; never to return to India, but to go into a house of business—to accept any honourable employment, so that he might not take her from her family and her home. But when this hope was unexpectedly prostrated, he turned again to the career which lay before him, and went back into the solitude of public life. He went back, chastened and subdued, full of the deepest love for the one, and of boundless charity for the many; not at all exasperated, not at all embittered, but with a softer and more loving heart than before; with an enlarged desire to benefit the human race, and a stronger faith in the boundless mercy of God. The refined tenderness and delicacy of his nature could be fittingly expressed only by the use of his own words. I know nothing more

beautiful—nothing more touching—than his letters on this subject. The entire unselfishness of his nature was manifest in every word that he spoke, up to the time when, the betrothal ended, he said to her whom he had lost, that, although there was cause for sorrow on both sides, there was none for reproach on either; that, with God's comfort, he should not fail to find happiness in single life, especially if he could feel assured of God's restoring hers; and conjured her to look up and be herself again, for the sake of all those who must grieve if she did not, and ever to feel that she had his full and undying esteem, his unpresuming friendship, and his unceasing prayers. It was all over. Thenceforth Humanity became his bride, 'and airy hopes his children.'

Happily for him, there was something in the great world of becoming magnitude to fire his imagination, to absorb his thoughts, and to invite him to energetic action. The contemplated invasion of Afghanistan was at this time occupying the minds of those members of the Cabinet whose duty it was to shape our policy in Asia, as seen both from our Western and our Eastern dominions. The information of any intelligent Englishman who had actually visited the countries, or any part of the countries, which were about to become the scene of our operations, was, therefore, eagerly sought. Alexander Burnes had returned to India, leaving behind him, however, some rich Oriental legacies; and it was no small thing in such a conjuncture, for a Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, or a President of the India Board, whose experiences did not lie much in that direction, to be able to converse with a British officer who

had visited Herat—the famous frontier city to which the Persians were laying siege. Whether Arthur Conolly were altogether the kind of man best suited to their purpose may admit, perhaps, of a doubt. They may have thought him a little over-enthusiastic—a little too wild and visionary. But sober-minded practical men were not very likely, in those days, to make such hazardous journeys as Arthur Conolly had made. The man who did these things had necessarily a dash of romance in his nature, and you might be sure that he would not expound his views in a very cold-blooded manner. One thing, however, must have satisfied them. He was delighted with the idea of an advance into Afghanistan. Seeing, as he did, in the distance such grand results to be obtained by British intervention, he did not scan very narrowly the means to be immediately employed. His view of the matter was rather that of a grand Anti-slavery Crusade, than of a political movement intended to check-mate the designs of another great European power. He grasped, in very singleness of heart, the idea of a band of Christian heroes entering the remote regions of Central Asia as Champions of Humanity and Pioneers of Civilization. Full of this thought, he drew up a memorandum for the Home Government, in which he expounded his views, saying ‘Now both the Russians and Persians have the most legitimate plea for invading Toorkistan, especially Kharasm, where numbers of their countrymen are held in abject slavery—a plea last to be disallowed by England!’ How, then, can we frustrate the designs of ambition which our rival will so speciously cover? Possibly, by persuading the Oosbegs themselves to

do away with the grievance which gives the Russians and Persians a pretext for invading them. Let the British Government send a properly accredited Envoy to Khiva, in the first place, and thence, if advisable, across the Oxus, at once to explain our present acts in Afghanistan, and to try this only open way of checking a Russian approach, which will entail far greater trouble upon us. Since the last Russian Embassy to Bokhara, the ruler of that kingdom has actually exerted himself to suppress the sale of Russians in his territory, and nearly all the Muscovite people who remain enslaved in Toorkistan are now in Kharasm. Nothing but fear can have induced the Amec of Bokhara to heed the Czar's remonstrances, and arguments which have proved so effectual with him should not fail with the Khan of Khiva, in the event of the latter chief's being brought to see the danger of Russo-Persian invasion nearer and greater than he has been accustomed to consider it. . . . The King of Bokhara would seem prepared to meet us half way in our commercial advances. When Sir A. Burnes was at his capital, "the Vizier," writes that officer, "conversed at great length on subjects of commerce relating to Bokhara and Britain, and expressed much anxiety to increase the communication between the countries, requesting that I myself would return *as a trading* ambassador to Bokhara." A similar desire for an improved trade with us was repeated to Mr Wolff, the missionary, when he visited Bokhara. The advantages of the commerce which his neighbour encourages cannot be unknown to the Khivan Khan, and few representations should be needed to convince the latter chief that he might

make his desert capital a still greater trade mart than Bokhara, through the facility that the river Oxus offers him.'

To remove the not unreasonable pretext for Russian advances in Central Asia, Arthur Conolly proposed that the British authorities should negotiate with the principal Oosbeg chiefs, and represent to them that if they would undertake to restrain the Turcoman tribes from carrying off into slavery the subjects of Russia and Persia, the British would use their influence with the Governments of those countries to persuade them to fix their boundaries at limits which would inspire our Government with confidence, and insure peace to the Oosbegs themselves. On the other hand, in treating with Russia, he contended that we should best consult our interests by basing all our arguments on the one broad principle of humanity. 'It might not be amiss,' he wrote, 'frankly to put it to the Court of St Petersburg whether they, on their part, will not desist from a jealousy which is injuring us both, and many people connected with us. Whether, ceasing from an unworthy policy, which seeks to keep alive a spirit of disaffection among the thousands whom it is our high aim to settle and enlighten, they will not generously unite with us in an endeavour peaceably to abolish rapine and slavery; to make safe trade roads to their own possessions near Toorkistan; and, in the words of their servant, Baron Mejdendorf, "*de faire germer, et d'étendre dans cette partie de l'Asie, les bienfaits de la civilisation Européenne.*" Let us direct,' he added, 'the vast means prepared to the accomplishment of the greatest possible end, and while we are in a position to

speak with effect, endeavour to lay the foundation of the grand beneficial influence that we ought to exercise over the long-neglected tribes of Western Asia! Suppose, however, that the above great project should entirely fail; that at the very outset the Oosbeks should reject our anti-slavery suggestions, or the Russians haughtily decline our interference, would our labour be lost? By no means. The cost of our mission would be well exchanged for increased knowledge of countries, in which, sooner or later, we shall be obliged to play some part, and for more positive notions than we now possess of the danger against which we have to provide; while it is probable that though the Oosbeks might desire to be left to fight their own battles with the Russians and Persians, they would accept overtures of a generally amicable nature from us that might have some way for the extension of our commercial relations beyond Afghanistan, which we hope to settle.'

These were suggestions not to be lightly regarded, at a time when the designs of Russia in the East were disturbing the serenity of the English Cabinet, and a British army was about to march into Central Asia. There might be more ardour and enthusiasm in Arthur Conolly than were likely to recommend him to official men; but there was a good substratum of sound sense at the bottom of his recommendations, and the authorities were not disinclined to avail themselves of the services of a man so eager to do anything and to suffer anything in so great a cause. At first, they were minded to send him directly from England to Toorkistan, with credentials from the Home Government; but afterwards they determined only to recommend such a

mission to the Governor-General, and therefore they sent him to India with letters to Lord Auckland, and with £500 in his pocket for the expenses of his journey. He was to travel by the way of Vienna, Constantinople, Armenia, and the Persian Gulf, and acquire, as he went, information that might be useful to his Government, and smooth the way for his future operations on the banks of the Oxus and the Jaxartes.

On the 11th of February, 1839, Arthur Conolly left London, and made for the Austrian capital. There he had an interview with the great minister and arch-diplomatist, Metternich, to whom he explained in detail our Central-Asian policy, and thereby removed some erroneous impressions which had been made upon his mind. It happened, also, that at that time an envoy from the Shah of Persia (Hoosein Khan by name) was halting at Vienna on his way to England. It was obviously a great thing that Conolly should hold frequent communication with the Elchee, and it was desirable, at the same time, that it should be as little formal and ceremonious as possible. So the English officer quartered himself at the hotel where the Persian minister was residing, and they soon established familiar intercourse with each other. This Hoosein Khan appears to have been a shrewd fellow, with some sense of humour in him. At one of the interviews, the details of which Conolly afterwards noted down, the English officer hinted that the Persian minister was prejudiced against Mr M'Neill. 'Not at all,' said Hoosein Khan. 'We have

always been the best of friends. He has lived at my house for days together. Indeed, I owe him my highest appointment. When it was proposed to send me as Envoy to England, M'Neill represented that I had not rank enough. "Why," replied the Shah, "Hoosein Khan is of a very ancient family. He is Adjutant-General, and he is my foster-brother. Moreover, we received the other day Mr Ellis from your Crown. Now, I'll engage that the Sovereign of England has at least three hundred subjects equal in station to Mr Ellis, whilst I have not ten equal to Hoosein Khan." "Your Majesty forgets," said M'Neill, "that Mr Ellis was a Privy-Councillor." "Very well," said the Shah, "we will add this dignity to Hoosein Khan's titles," and I was made a *Preivy-Koonsillah* from that day.\*

The case was well argued upon both sides, but with no result. The Persian was as tenacious of his opinions as the Englishman; and it must be admitted that he had a way of stating the case in favour of his master, which, if not always truthful, had a very plausible appearance of truth. It is instructive to see the different glosses which two men can put upon the same event, as seen from the sides of their respective nationalities. Thus the well-known story of the seizure of the British Courier, which did so much to embitter our relations with Persia, as seen from the Persian side, was rather a wrong suffered by them than a wrong

\* This conversation really took place between Mahomed Shah and Major Rawlinson, who conveyed to the royal camp at Nishapoor Mr M'Neill's protest against Hoosein Khan's appointment as minister to England.



done to the English. 'The Shah never thought,' said the Persian, 'of injuring India. He went to Herat to chastise rebels who continually murdered or sold his own subjects. Then comes your Elchee and prohibits punishment and redress, and when he finds his representations unheeded (how could the Shah prefer them to the cries of his own people?), he intrigues with the Prince of Herat, sends a messenger there secretly, and when this fellow is caught returning in Afghan clothes, like a spy as he was, and was seized as anybody in any country would have been in such circumstances,\* his short imprisonment is magnified, his interested statements are taken in preference to the testimony of respectable men who were lookers-on, and knew everything, and we, who had a right to be the complainants, are made to appear the party in fault.' Again, taking a comprehensive view of the whole question, Hoosein Khan said: 'You talk of our acting against your interests, and our own real interests; but are we ever to sacrifice what we think to be ours, to your notions for us, or to your precautions for yourselves? The question of Persian policy lies in a small space, and the sooner it is reduced to its essence the better. We are situated between you and Russia, being weaker than either of you; we therefore want support from one or the other. If you will give it, good; if not, we must just take to those whom we like least, and make the most of them, whether it pleases you

\* The Duke of Wellington is said to have observed, that if he had been in the Shah's place he should have hanged Mahomed Ali Maafee as a spy; and nothing is more probable than that he would.

or not. The Shah will never give up his claims upon Afghanistan: why should he resign what he can take with ease, purely to soothe a fear of the British Government? The whole country up to Caubul was ready to submit to him when he left Herat, and will prove so whenever he advances his standard again. You misinterpret his Majesty's generosity in retiring at your request, and think you gained your wish by sending troops to Karrak; you encourage revolt in the South; does it not strike your acute penetration that we can play the last game, if need be, in Hindostan? We can; and if you provoke us too far, we will.' To this Conolly replied: 'Your admissions now go far to justify our proceedings in Afghanistan. Your very threat of using your political influence against our repose in India, is quite reason enough for us to prevent your establishing it any nearer, by the fair way that your hostile conduct has opened to us.' If this was an empty threat that the Persian uttered, not a clear declaration of the settled policy of his Government, it is certain that we did not wait very many years to see how effectually it could be converted into a fact.

From Vienna, Arthur Conolly made his way to Constantinople. There most propitiously it happened that he found an Envoy from Khokund—one of the very Oosbeg States which he desired to wean from their inhuman habits. The chiefs of Central Asia had, and still have, unbounded faith in the Sooltan. They believe that his power is unlimited, and that he can rescue them from all their difficulties and dangers. As I write, the Khan of Khokund has

an Envoy, if not two, at Constantinople.\* To Conolly, this circumstance of the presence of the Khokundee at the Ottoman capital was one of happy augury; and he determined to turn it to the best possible account. So he soon made the acquaintance of the Envoy, and began to expound to him his views of the situation in Central Asia. 'One of the Shah's pretexts for invading Herat,' he observed, 'was that the people of that State used to carry off his subjects into slavery; but this plea was proved false by his refusing to accept our guarantee to Kamran's promise that such should not again occur. I don't think that there were many real Heratees engaged in this work.† The Hazarehs perhaps did it occasionally, in concert with the Toorkomans, and it was against the latter tribes that the Shah of Persia should have directed his arms, if he wished to put down the evil, as his father, Abbas Mirza, did at Serria. People say that there are now in Khiva, Bokhara, and other parts of your country up there, as many as thirty thousand Persians taken one time or other from the villages and high road of Irân by the Toorkomans. Is it so?' 'Thirty?' was the reply, with a hearty laugh; 'thirty! say a hundred thousand, or two, if you will; we've no end of those scoundrels; upon our parts, we find them very useful.' 'And other people also? Russians! have you many of those?' 'We haven't many, nor the Bokhara people either; at Khiva

\* Written in 1865.

† He had afterwards too much reason to change his opinions on this point. In fact, Yar Mahomed, the Heratee minister, was one of the greatest slave-dealers in Central Asia.

there are a great many.' 'What do they do there?' asked Conolly. 'They do everything; work in the field—work in the houses.' 'We English, perhaps your Excellency knows, do not approve of slavery at all. Our Government, the other day, gave forty millions of ducats to buy off the slaves of its own subjects.' 'How? What do you mean?' asked the astonished Envoy. 'Why, in former times, many English subjects, possessed of estates in foreign provinces of England, had been the owners of negro slaves, who used to till their lands for the cultivation of sugar, spices, &c. Now the rule in England itself is, that no foot which touches its dust can remain for a moment longer enslaved against its will. The free people at home all cried 'o the throne that no English subjects should have a slave anywhere, so the Government, not to be unjust, bought off all the negroes from its own people, and declared them free for ever.' 'You wish men not to be slaves of each other, but only *bundagan khoda*, slaves of God. Good for you, if you do well. Our habits are different.' 'Yes,' said Conolly, 'as I learned in my endeavours to reach Khiva.'

A few days afterwards Arthur Conolly again visited the Envoy, and plunged deeply into the politics of Central Asia; the depths which he sought to fathom ever being those in which he touched with his foot the abominations of that vile traffic in human flesh, which he was eager to root out from the land. They talked about the complications that had recently arisen—of the movements of the Persians, the Russians, and the English, and of the dangers which beset the Oosbeg States. The Envoy asked what

was to be done—what was to be the remedy. This was the opportunity which Conolly desired. ‘I have no certain remedy,’ he answered; ‘but there is one which may be tried. The Russians will invade Khiva, and take other Oosbeg States, on the ground that they have a right to liberate their people enslaved among you. We could not say a word against this, nor would we; for, to be frank with you, if any of our people had been in the condition that theirs are, we should long ago have done what they threaten to do. You must send every Russian slave out of your territories, and never capture any more.’ ‘We and the Bokharians have not many Russians,’ said the Envoy; ‘but the Khiva Khan wouldn’t find it easy to do what you propose. He has a great many.’ ‘How many?’ ‘More than a thousand, certainly. There’s only one way in which I can see a likelihood of your plan being accomplished, by the Russians *buying* all their people. They are dispersed among many masters; so the Khan could not give them up if he wished.’ ‘I don’t think the Russians would condescend to this,’ returned Conolly. ‘Perhaps, however, an arrangement might be made, if you promised never to capture any more. What would it cost to buy the thousands you speak of?’ ‘Not less than fifty or sixty thousand ducats. Perhaps you would buy the whole, and make the Russians a present of them. This would not be a great thing after your millions of ducats.’ ‘Well, we’ll discuss all practicable means when the plan is agreed to. And the Persians! Will you let them go also, and cease from your forays?’ ‘Oh, you must not think of the Persians,’ rejoined the Envoy, ‘in such an arrangement.

'There are too many of them by hundreds of thousands. Besides, we want them. For the Russians, perhaps, we might come to an arrangement.' 'Sooner or later, methinks,' said Conolly, 'you'll be obliged to satisfy both nations on this score; but it isn't for me to dictate positively on the matter. The question in all its bearings concerns you much more than it does us. We and the Russians are people likely to quarrel, if we come near each other in the East. We, please God, are well able to wage war with any nation, in any part of the world, but we don't want to quarrel with any people, because war is inhuman and expensive, and because it interrupts commerce, which is the source of our great strength. For this reason we wish to keep the Russians at a distance; the best way of doing so is to be strong and independent (for this reason we are building up the Afghans), and we don't make big professions, so we shall not make big promises. Here' (showing Burnes's map) 'is our position, there is yours; you see that we are far enough from you to prevent your entertaining the slightest apprehension of our power, though we are not so far that we cannot do you good in several ways. We should like to confer with you about the means of removing Russia's pretext for coming farther on in your direction. Hear, all of you, what we have to say, and adopt what you like. If you like none of our suggestions regarding other powers, you can open and keep open a friendly intercourse with the English Government, and draw close in commercial dealings with our people of Hindostan.' 'Very good! very good!' replied the Envoy; 'write to your ministers, and we will see the end. 1, for

my part, will engage that you, or any other (English) Envoy, shall go safely up there and back.'

Again and again the Envoy pressed Conolly to wait until he himself had received from the Sooltan his orders to depart, that they might travel to Khokund together; but the English officer pleaded the instructions of his own Government, and declined the invitation. In truth, he had already made a longer halt at Constantinople than was consistent with the wishes of the authorities in England, who censured him for his delay. But he had been doing good work. His conferences with the Envoy from Khokund had done much to detach that worthy from the grasp of Russian diplomacy, which would have had it all its own way, if Conolly had not been at Constantinople to exercise that benign influence which few men could resist. He parted on the best possible terms from the Oosbeg agent, carrying with him all sorts of friendly assurances and some pledges; and on the 22nd of August he left Constantinople, *en route* to Baghdad, intending to reach Samsoun as the first stage in his journey. But learning that the road thence to Diarbekir was infested with bands of plunderers, and scarcely passable, he landed at Trebizonde, and, by the Consul's advice, proceeded to Erzeroum, where he arrived early in September. After a halt of two days, he resumed his journey, furnished with letters for his safe protection to the authorities of the province, and before the end of October—having passed a week at Baghdad *en route*, where he first made the acquaintance of Major Rawlinson—he had reached Bushire in the Persian Gulf, where Major Hennell, the British Resident, not having immediately at his com-

mand a Government vessel, sent Conolly forward in a fast-sailing merchant-ship to Bombay, which place he reached on the 13th November, 1839.

From Bombay he made his way to Calcutta, saw the Governor-General, expounded his views, and received the confidences of Lord Auckland. Nothing could have been more propitious than the conjuncture. There was a bright flush of success over all our policy in Afghanistan. In Arthur Conolly's words, we had to all outward seeming 'built up the Douranee Empire' again. We had accomplished a great revolution. The *de facto* ruler of Afghanistan was beaten and a fugitive. The nationality of the country was stunned and bewildered by the roar of the British guns. More than all, the great magician, who had accomplished this mighty change, was a near relative of Conolly himself. The Envoy and Minister at the Court of Shah Soojah-ool-Moolk was his cousin, William Macnaghten, about soon to have the prefix of *Sir* to his name—a name not to be mentioned without a respectful and a tender regret, for he was a brave and an able man, who sacrificed his life in the service of his country. The Governor-General, therefore, had no very difficult part to play. As the Home Government had left it to him to find a field of adventure for Arthur Conolly, Lord Auckland also in his turn left it to the representative of British interests in Afghanistan to indicate the particular service on which his enthusiastic relative might most advantageously be employed.

So Conolly proceeded to Caubul, and in the spring of 1840 was immersed, breast-high, in the troubled stream of Afghan politics. What was then stirring in his warm heart



and in his active brain may be gathered from the letters which he addressed to an old and very dear friend—a man high in place and deservedly high in honour. I do not know why, in such a work as this, designed, however feeble the execution, to do honour to the great Indian services, I should not write, in this place, the name of one who was for many years among the brightest of their ornaments. The beloved friend to whom Arthur Conolly poured out his heart more freely than to any other correspondent, was Thomas Campbell Robertson, a member of the Bengal Civil Service, who at this time was Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, and Provisional Governor-General of India. He had risen to this high station after a blameless career of more than thirty years of beneficent work, in many parts of the country, and in many departments of the service. With a largeness of official zeal, which ever kept him in the front rank of his contemporaries, he combined a genuine love of European literature, which was a source of unfailing refreshment to him in his non-official hours, and made him a delightful companion to the cherished few whose intercourse he sought. He had ever a high sense of justice—of that justice which has its root in a generous and sympathizing nature—and he groaned in bitterness of spirit over the inroads of that new faith which, during the later stages of his career, tended towards the absorption of the native principalities and the subversion of the ancient aristocracy of India. Few members of the enlightened service to which he belonged had larger or sounder views of Indian policy; but a physical infirmity, which crept upon him in the prime of his life, debarred him

from taking his right place in the public eye among the Indian statesmen of his generation, at a time when the services of Indian statesmen were in great national request. And I am not sure whether his good old-school opinions, which he had lived to see disowned by a new race of civilians, did not help to keep him in the background. Nothing, at all events, could convince him that such was not the case.

There were circumstances of a domestic nature which caused Mr Robertson to take a deep interest in the fortunes of the young Cavalry officer, and which bound Arthur Conolly to the veteran civilian in bonds which at times may have been very painful to him, but which he would not have severed for the world. I have said that what was stirring in the soldier's warm heart was freely communicated to his friend, who well knew all his sorrows. No one could understand better than Mr Robertson the yearning desire for continual excitement which at that time was gnawing Arthur Conolly's breast ; no one could appreciate better the full force of every word he wrote—its tenderness, its generosity, its consideration for another—when after much that, profoundly touching as is the interest of it, I cannot bring myself to make public, he proceeded to say : ' Those feelings have more force with me than ever now, because I am about to undertake a journey, which is not without risks to life, and if mine should end in Tartary, I would not have her fancy it shortened or carelessly ventured in consequence of my disappointed love for her. You will be able, if necessary, to explain that the cause I go upon is one which every man must be proud and eager to peril his life for—

the noblest in which he could fall; and you may without hesitation assure her, that I have regained a cheertul mind, and only hope that the same unfailing spirit of goodness who has surrounded me with objects to make life a great blessing will give her the best gifts of earth, and make her eternally happy in heaven, where all separations and disquietudes will be healed. I meant but to say a few words on this subject when I began it, and yet after a whole sheet was not half satisfied with what I have written. You will divine my thoughts more clearly than I have expressed them, and will forgive my prolixity. It was like your kindness to answer for my motive in halting at Constantinople. I only got reproof for setting aside Talleyrand's motto,\* but I acted honestly, and the more the politics of Toorkistan open upon us, the more am I satisfied that my conduct was wise. I trust that I shall prove it by gaining all that you kindly wish me to obtain on the Jaxartes. Many thanks for your offer of Baber's Memoirs, but I have already provided myself with a copy. It will indeed be interesting to read the history and thoughts of this great man in the land of his birth. You ask for my sentiments on Afghan affairs as modified by personal observation. After I had ended my late journey through the country from Sukkur to Jellalabad, I submitted the impressions which I had noted on the way to Sir William Macnaghten, who is the person best qualified to judge and correct them. I consider the move into this country unavoidable and politic, but did *I not* think so, I would exclaim against the faintest thought of going back again. The recent hesitation is likely to embarrass greatly

\* 'Surtout, monsieur, point de zele.'

it not to ruin us, whereas if we resolutely and literally set ourselves to consolidate the nationality of the Afghans and to get them good government, we shall after some years gain a full return for our money, and see that we have been the instruments of incalculable good. I feel very confident about all our policy in Central Asia, for I think that the designs of our Government there are honest, and that they will work with a blessing from God, who seems now to be breaking up all the barriers of the long-closed East, for the introduction of Christian knowledge and peace. It is deeply interesting to watch the effects that are being produced by the exertions of the European powers—some, selfish and contrary; others, still selfish, but qualified with peace and generosity; all made instrumental to good. See the French in Africa, the English, Austrians, and Russians on the Bosphorus, forcing the Turks to be Europeans under a shadow of Mohammedanism, and providing for the peaceful settlement of the fairest and most sacred countries in the world. Will you turn aside when you go home at the end of next year to see “those blessed acres which Our Saviour trod?” Syria, it seems, is to revert to the Porte. If so, and the new Sultan acts up to the “Hatti Scherifs” (Khat-c-Shereef) which he published soon after his accession, the now eager desire of the Jews to return to the Holy Land of their fathers will find speedy gratification. Did you attentively read that Khat-e-Shereef? If not, it may interest you to peruse the copy which I enclose. It has been considerably fingered, for I have been concocting from it an address which we hoped Shah Soojah would adopt; but his Majesty, I regret to say, ran a cold eye over the production, and said it was

much too refined for his lieges; that they had too much wind in their heads already, and that he would consider of something brief and more suited to their cur-like understandings. This is not quite the mood for an Afghan regenerator. Sir William Macnaghten deals very tenderly with him, and probably this brings him round to points which our impatient desire for reform would overleap. If the Envoy had a *carte blanche* at the Calcutta treasury, and could say, "I'll give your Majesty so much to do so and so," we should get on better and faster, but Lord A. already begins to ask when the Shah will be able to keep himself, while the King answers that proposal with "Give me time to see what my means really are," and looks anxiously out for members of his body politic to which he may apply the screw. You and Sir James Carnac must back Sir William against the easy-going secretaries, who, quietly entrenched within the Ditch, rave about economy, and sententiously recommend prudence. If we treat the Toorkistan question liberally, we shall, I think, secure the great position which we have now gained, and make our jealousy of Russian advance in this direction the means of purifying and enriching to our future advantage the whole of Oosbeg Tartary. You will have heard that my route has been changed, and that I and Major Rawlinson are to proceed in the first instance to the head-quarters of General Per-owsky, or -offsky, there to see that he does not exceed the Emperor's declarations, and I hope quietly to commence the arrangement which it is proposed to base upon Kokund. You saw the "instructions" issued to me for my mission to the latter state, and probably guessed that I followed the usual practice of Envoys in

drawing them up for myself. I am very glad that you approved of their tenor. Sir James Carnac has also written his approval of this mission, and comforted me with expressions like yours for the jobation that I got from home for delaying at Constantinople. His honour, moreover, very kindly sent me a public acknowledgment that my labours in this journey were esteemed, the which I add to the papers now forwarded to please my brother, who thinks more about me than I deserve. Lord Auckland also wrote very kindly to me.'

It had been arranged that Captain Conolly and Major Rawlinson should proceed together to the Russian camp at Khiva, but the failure of General Perofiski's expedition had caused this plan to be abandoned; and Lord Auckland was growing more and more distrustful of the benefits of extending the 'great game' all over Central Asia. Eager for action as Conolly was, the folding up of a scheme which, according to his perceptions, embraced nothing less than a grand Anti-slavery Confederation, was a heavy disappointment to him. 'I was greatly disappointed,' he wrote to the same dear old friend at the end of May, 'when Lord Auckland's prohibitory letter arrived, for I had set my heart upon this nobly-stirring employment, and when the chance of it seemed removed, I felt the blank that a man must feel who has a heavy grief as the first thing to fall back upon; but then, this very sorrow operated to compose me, showing that I ought to sit loose to lesser disappointments. Now things look promising; but the Governor-General is so anxious to get off without embarking in anything new, that he may put a second veto upon it, at least on onward

progress. I send you my Toorkish notions, contained in two letters to Lord Auckland, with a continuation of the proceedings of which I inflicted a first part upon you. Please send all on, when perused, to my brother William at Saharunpore, under frank. I am ashamed of the first page now that I read its murnuring tenor, but it is dark, and just post-time, and you will forgive my groans. I never utter them to anybody else. I hope to hear from you before we start. Write me your sentiments on my Toorkistan policy. Macnaghten will forward them after me, and it will be both a satisfaction to hear from you and a benefit to hear your suggestions. You need not care to write freely, for I am sure you will write nothing to offend the Ooroos, should your letter—which is not probable—fall into their hands. I am sure that extended liberality is the policy. If you agree with me, back the scheme.’

Upon this great question of the extension of our diplomacy in Toorkistan, the highest authorities were divided. Sir Alexander Burnes was strongly opposed to the scheme, as one involving extraordinary risks; \* but Sir W. Macnagh-

\* The letters of Burnes to Dr Lord, in 1840, are full of emphatic protests against this expedition. During the preparation of the preceding Memoir, I noted down a number of passages illustrative of his opinions upon this subject, from which I take the following as sufficient for the purpose: ‘ March 26. Arthur Conolly has gone to Jelalabad. He is slighty, though a very nice fellow: he is to regenerate Toorkistan, dismiss all the slaves, and looks upon our advent as a design of Providence to spread Christianity. “ Khiva is subdued by Russia,” said I. “ Bokhara is her ally, and Kokan not inimical, if not friendly. How, then, is the league to be formed, and how are you to get two hundred thousand Kuzzilbash slaves given up for nothing? It must be done. Yes, with the wand of a Prospero !!! ” ’ ‘ April

ten had imbibed some of the enthusiasm of his earnest-minded relative, and had consented to impress upon the

5. But what will you say to the astounding announcement that Arthur Conolly and Major Rawlinson are to go to Kokan? It seems mighty civil to take all the work out of you, and send another to reap the honours. The *Agra* says I am to go to Turkistan with General Sale, but I have not heard a word of it, and have my little wish to do nothing of the kind as to the Kokan journey. I replied to the Envoy that it would be found a tough job, and I thought would only irritate Russia the more, that Bokhara, Kokan, and Khiva were all now under Russia's grasp, and what could we do there? That as to Bokhara, indeed, a mission there might, if it would be received, avail us as letting us publish our views. 'April 15. I told you that, if an opportunity offered, I would have my say on this crotchet of Conolly going to Kokan, and with my "observations" I said to Macnaghten that you were a little startled at "being superseded towards Kokan by Conolly," as I thought it the most delicate way to convey my coincidence with your views. I received his reply yesterday, and send it, as it also concerns you on other points. The Envoy's logic is very bad. Conolly, it is true, applied to go to Khiva while in England, and Sir J. Hobhouse referred the matter to the Governor-General for consideration. When he got to Constantinople he met a Kokan agent, and so much was he taken that he stopped, and referred to England the propriety of bringing an Oosbeg agent to London, and pointed out the advantages of an alliance with Kokan. For this he got a wig for delaying at Constantinople, and the wig he gave me to read. How, after this, Macnaghten can bring himself to believe that "Conolly has express instructions from the home authorities to be employed in that quarter" (Kokan), I know not. Never you mind, the journey is not feasible; and if it is, the *cui bono* is not apparent, and I should be sincerely sorry to see you employed on it. . . . Since Conolly received my "observations," I have not heard from him, but Ferris writes that "Conolly appears bent on taking the trip to Kokan." 'May 13. There is something new: Kokan pronounced impracticable, and Conolly going on a mission to the Russian camp, consequent on instructions from Lord Auckland to address General Peroffski. The plan was matured when I was at



Governor-General the advantages that might ensue from Conolly's mission to Kokund. Whilst the question was still in abeyance, about the middle of July, the latter wrote to Major Rawlinson, at Candahar, saying, 'Spite of all the encouragements to persevere that Todd's letters from Abbott and Shakespear afford, Burnes persists in believing that all interference in Toorkistan on our part has been and will be "insanity." "Our rear," he says, "is not secure enough." Then make it more so. But don't, for this imperfect reason, give up as lost the important ground in front, upon the independence of which from Russian control depends your retaining the necessary footing that you have gained

Pughman, and sent out, cut and dry, to me, saying that I was the man to go, but I could not be spared, and my health had not been very good! I struck all out about my health, and offered to go at once; to prevent all mistakes, however, I wrote to the Envoy officially, and as my letter will explain much, I send it and his reply.' 'May 26. Of the Khivan expedition under Conolly I have nothing new to communicate, further than that Rawlinson and he are preparing, and their start is to be regulated by the arrival of a Khivan Elchee (God save the mark!) *via* Candahar. I think they cool upon it, but perhaps I am wrong, and you shall hear further particulars in my next.' . . . 'June 13. Conolly having been beaten out of Kokan . . . has chalked out for himself a mission to Bokhara to release Stoddart, but it does not seem to be entertained. He will stand a fair chance of keeping Stoddart company if he goes, but it is very disgraceful we can do nothing to release Stoddart.' 'August 26. A. Conolly now says he will start on Friday, but what he goes for it would be impossible to say, seeing that Shakespear states, in his last despatch, that the Khan of Khiva had given up to him all his Russian prisoners, and that he was about to start with them for the first Russian fort; if so, what is A. Conolly to do? I would not mind betting he will never go at all, and if he goes, how is he to get on with this confederacy forming ahead?'

in Afghanistan. Our endeavour to form a peaceful and just confederation of the Oosbeg powers for the preservation of their independence, cannot commit us in any way, while the knowledge gained in the endeavour (supposing a failure, which I do not) will better enable us to resort to the *ultima ratio*, if the Ooroos should force such an appeal upon us. I was much gratified by a perusal of Shakespear's letter; it shows him to be a man of ready apprehension and sound sense, and has given Sir William a very favourable idea of his capacity, which he will not fail to report to the Governor-General. I shall be glad to think that I have such a fellow-labourer in the field, if I am sent to any part of it, which appears more than ever probable, though not yet positive—though I have no end of regret that we did not start at once for the Jaxartes together. . . . . I think it *must* end in my going to Khokund, probably *viâ* Khiva, with the Envoy thence, Yakoob Bai, with whom I have established great croneyism, in order that I may communicate Sir William's last instructions to Shakespear. Perhaps I may come round by Bokhara, if the Ameer relents upon the last forcible appeal that Sir William is about to make to him through two Sahibzadehs, whom Shah Soojah sends with a letter recapitulating all that he and his allies, the English, have done to disabuse the Commander of the Faithful of unjust notions and unnecessary apprehensions, religious and political, and of all the insults and injuries that the said allied Governments have received in return; briefly ending with a request to know whether he is considered a friend or enemy, and begging to be the medium of a similar question from the English Government, who, considering

the long detention of their Envoy, Colonel Stoddart, *infra* their *dig.*, will expect his honourable release as the first sign of any friendly disposition that the Ameer may feel towards them, and require explanation of his conduct in thus treating their Ambassador and missives. I should have mentioned this first, but my brain has got muddled with much copying and original scribbling, this being a very busy day, and John \* having shirked clerk's work for the organization of more Jan-Bazes.'

That the mission, which he so longed to undertake, was a perilous one, was not to be disguised. Captain Abbott had gone to Khiva, and had fought for his life. Colonel Stoddart had gone to Bokhara, and had been thrown into hopeless captivity. The liberation of poor Stoddart was one of the many benevolent objects which Conolly hoped to accomplish by his embassy. It was with much grief and disappointment, therefore, that he saw the efforts of our Government to obtain the release of their officer limited to the despatch of a letter from Shah Soojah to the Amcer of Bokhara. Even this was a slow process. 'At last,' wrote Conolly, on the 24th of July, to Major Rawlinson, 'we have got the letter to the Ameer of Bokhara, through the Shah's *difter* (office), and the two Sahibzadehs propose starting with it to-morrow, which their calendar shows to be a remarkably fortunate day. May their errand be successful! Poor Stoddart's health was drunk last night at the Ghuzni anniversary dinner, among absent English friends, after a briefly eloquent speech by Sir Alexander,

\* His brother, John Conolly, who was an attaché to the Caubul Mission.

who concluded by expressing a hope that if the last of Sir William Macnaghten's amicable endeavours to bring the Ameer to reason should fail, our gallant and unfortunate countryman would be released from captivity by *Baron Bokhara*. You may imagine the accent and energy with which Burnes thundered out the two last words.' Then, after a detailed account of other uproarious incidents of the anniversary dinner, he wrote, with characteristic delicacy of feeling: 'I felt very much ashamed of myself when my Ghibre lad handed me my cap and whip; and I thought as we rode home, in the loveliest of calm nights, how very much English gentlemen let themselves down by these vulgar outbreaks. I remain in uncertainty about the Toorkistan journey. I must go at last, and if so, I'll write all the scientific parts of my researches to you, that you may add learned notes to them.' A few days afterwards he wrote again to the same correspondent, saying: 'If I ever cool my parched brow in the Jaxartes, I'll drink a goblet of its waters to the extension of your shadow in every direction. You've a great game, a *noble* game before you, and I have strong hope that you will be able to steer through all jealousy, and caprice, and sluggishness, till the Afghans unite with your own countrymen in appreciating your labours for a fine nation's regeneration and advancement. These are not big words, strung for sound or period. I didn't know that I could well express my desire more simply, certainly not when writing at a long canter to reach the post-bag ere it closes for the night. I've been rendering English into Persian, and Persian into English, till I feel quite addled, and every half hour brings one of

Sir William's comprehensive requests in a pencil note.'

The month of August dawned auspiciously, and the clouds soon began to disappear. On the 4th he wrote, in the highest spirits, to Major Rawlinson, at Candahar, saying: 'Hip, hip, hurrah! I do believe that I am fairly going now, so accept my best thanks for your congratulations. I receive them with a pang of real regret that you are not going with me; but Todd bids me be comforted with the thoughts of your realized important elevation, so I'll utter no vain words. Nothing can be done ahead, unless Afghanistan is properly settled, and I have confident hope of your being highly instrumental to this desirable end.'

The fact was that help had come to him from an unexpected quarter. His old friend Syud Zahid, the Khokund Envoy, with whom he had discussed the politics of Toorkistan in Constantinople, had written him a letter reminding him of their past acquaintance, stating that it had sufficed to keep him out of the hands of Russia, and adding that he had been to Khiva, where he had seen Richmond Shakespeare, but that he had hoped to hear from Conolly at Meshed. Sir William Macnaghten lost no time in sending a translation of this letter to the Governor-General, observing: 'The evidence which this letter affords of the importance that Syud Zahid continues to attach to the friendship of the British Government, in that he has had opportunity of consulting with the Court of Khiva about the results of manifested intentions of Russia towards Toorkistan, will, I have no doubt, be judged very satisfactory by his Lordship in Council. Syud Zahid shows that he waited a whole month at Meshed in the hope of hearing

from Captain Conolly, who gave him to expect that he himself, or some other British officer, would be appointed to join him on the Persian frontier, for the purpose of proceeding with him, *vid* Khiva, to Khokund; and the stress that he lays upon his sacrifice of Russian offers for the sake of English connection, is so strong, that I am of opinion we should no longer hesitate to show our sense of his friendly overtures, especially since it appears, from a private letter from Lieutenant Shakespear to Major Todd, that, judging from my former notifications of an intention to depute Captain Conolly and Major Rawlinson to Khokund, he had spoken at Khiva of the expected arrival there of the two officers in company with the Khan Huzrut's Envoy to this place.'

The precise objects of the mission were, as officially noted, the establishment of a correct impression, at every place which Conolly might visit, of British policy and strength, as it bore upon Asia and on Europe (with reference especially to our interference in Afghanistan), the strengthening of amicable arrangements with the chief Oosbeg powers, which had shown a friendly disposition towards us, and endeavouring to persuade them to help themselves, and enable us to help them, by doing prompt justice to their enemies, and forming an agreement with each other to prevent or to redress future injuries done by any one party among them to Russia, so as to deprive the latter power of all pretext for interfering with their independence. Either at Khiva or Khokund, Conolly was to learn the result of Shah Soojah's mission to Bokhara to obtain the release of Colonel Stoddart. If by the influence

thus exerted, or by other means, the Ameer should be induced to exhibit a decided disposition to atone for his past conduct, and to resume friendly relations with us and the Afghan King, Conolly was authorized to return to Afghanistan *via* Bokhara. Otherwise, his course was to be regulated by circumstances.

The general scheme of the mission having been settled and the detailed instructions issued—which, after the manner of diplomacy generally, were drafted by Conolly himself—preparations were made for the journey, not the least of which was the selection of a fitting Afghan Envoy to accompany the British officer. This gave rise to some ridiculous intrigues and complications, which Conolly described with much humour in his correspondence. One candidate for the office was said to be ‘a dreadfully modest and downcast man, who had never been heard of out of the Shah’s chambers, and his Majesty confessed that he was chiefly meritorious as a candle-snuffer. So he was set aside;’ and at last the choice settled on one Allahdad Khan, of the Populzye tribe, whom Conolly described as ‘a scrubby-looking, sallow little man, with a scant beard and a restless eye, which seems to indicate all the disposition of intrigue.’ Spoken of by the Shah’s minister, who had said that Allahdad Khan was ‘such an intrigant that it would take three hundred Cashmcrees to make another such one.’ ‘So perhaps,’ said Conolly, ‘I read his visage by the false light of the latter old defamer’s report (he never has a good word for mortal but himself, or some one in whom he is peculiarly interested), and shall find the Khan a good representative of the Afghan monarch. I

have shaken hands with him as fast friends and fellow-workers for the great end that lies before us. Our departure,' he added, 'has been delayed for another week. I am sorry, and yet on some accounts glad, for it will enable me to cram a little more useful knowledge for the route, and to take leave of my many friends in waiting. Perhaps also I may get my long coming kit, in which are many things which I desire for the approaching voyage.'

At last, everything was ready for a start; and on the 22nd of August Conolly wrote to Rawlinson at Candahar: 'We are just on the wing, and I shall make the best of my way to the two capitals for which I carry credentials. Shakespear has really done wonders, and if we can follow up the good impressions which he and Abbott have made, if the British Government will give pecuniary aid, we may keep the Russians out of Toorkistan altogether, and bring about a fine order of things there for every party concerned; and I only wish again that you were to be of the party to accomplish it; but, as I said before, you occupy a high and useful station, and can't be at two places at once. If the British Government would only play the grand game—help Russia cordially to all that she has a right to expect—shake hands with Persia—get her all possible amends from the Oosbeks, and secure her such a frontier as would both keep these men-stealers and ravagers in wholesome check—take away her pretext for pushing herself in, letting herself be pushed on to the Oxus; force the Bokhara Ameer to be just to us, the Afghans, the other Oosbeg States, and his own kingdom. But why go on, you know my—at any rate in one sense—enlarged views. Inshallah! the expe-



diency—nay, the necessity of them will be seen, and we shall play the noble part that the first Christian nations of the world ought to fill.' This, however, was only a false start. September found him still at Caubul, 'bothered and detained;' but on the 3rd he reported that he was at last fairly off—'King's and Company's and Oorgunjee men,' commencing their first march.

It happened that at this time great events were taking shape in Afghanistan. The deposed Ameer of Caubul, who had for some time been an exile and a fugitive, was now returning to the land of his fathers and raising the tribes of the Hindoo Koosh in a last despairing effort to recover his lost dominions. A slender detachment of troops, principally of Shah Soojah's army, posted at Bameean, was threatened by the advancing levies of the ex-Ameer, and it was necessary to send a regiment of the Company's troops to reinforce them. They started from Caubul at the very time of Conolly's departure; so he accompanied them, and was present in Brigadier Dennie's action with Dost Mahomed and the Wallee of Khooloom on the 18th of September. The victory then gained cleared the way for the advance of the British Mission; so Conolly and his party pushed on through the country of the Hazarehs, without any remarkable adventures by the way. Ever as he went there rose up before him fresh evidences of the ubiquity of the detestable traffic in human flesh, which it was the darling object of his soul to suppress. 'The articles,' he wrote in his journal, 'which the Hazarehs and Imauk take to market are *men and women*, small black oxen, cows, sheep,' &c. &c. In the neighbourhood of Maimunah he found that slaves

were the representatives of value in that part of the country. One man offered him a good horse in exchange for a pony and a young male slave. When Conolly asked him if he were not ashamed of dealing in God's creatures, he apologized by saying that he did not mean a slave in the flesh, but the money-value of a slave—'showing,' said Conolly, 'that men are here a standard of barter, as sheep are among the Hazarehs.'

There was a war then raging between the Imauks and the Hazarehs, which greatly increased the difficulties and the dangers of the journey, but after some adventures, Conolly and his companions reached Merv, which is the head-quarters of the slave-trade of Toorkistan. Here the things which he saw filled his soul with measureless compassion, and excited the keenest indignation. And he suffered all the more in the presence of so much iniquity, because he felt that he was condemned to silence. 'I have found it necessary,' he said, 'to repress even the expression of our sympathies for the strangers who are so unhappily enslaved in this country, for the interference of Abbott and Shakespear for the release of the Russian captives has given rise to an idea, which has spread like wild-fire through Toorkistan, that the English have come forward as deliverers of all who are in bondage there—a notion which, grateful as it may be to our national reputation, required to be corrected by all who come to Oosbeg Tartary in any political character, lest it should excite the enmity of slave-owners against all our efforts for good among them, as well as increase the unhappiness of the enslaved. To you, however, I may mention that the state

of affairs here is pitiable in the extreme, and such as to make every Englishman who witnesses it most earnestly reprobate the idea of our consenting to its continuance for the sake of any political contingency whatever.' Determined, as he said, to examine into all the sins of the place, he rode into the slave-market, and saw 'enough to shame and sicken the coarsest heart.' Slaves of both sexes and all ages were exposed for sale, and intending purchasers were going about from one group to another, 'handling them like cattle.'\* But other feelings than these were

\* To this Conolly adds: 'Judge only from the following note. As we came out from visiting the Bai (governor), a party of Zekkali Toorkomans unceremoniously entered, bearing three blackened skulls upon the point of lances, and leading thirty bound persons from Kelat-i-Nadier, who, with thirty-six horses, had been recently captured in a chupao. When they had reported the success of their expedition, these bandits gave the governor two men and two horses for his share, excusing themselves from paying the full proportion of one in ten, on the plea that they had lost or injured some of their own horses. They then presented the heads of their victims, and having received five tillas for each, received orders to parade them through the bazaar, it being market-day, where I, an hour afterwards, saw them again hung by the beards to a pole. Determined to examine into all the sins of this place, which had been reported by my servants, I ordered my horse when the market was warm, and riding through every corner of it, saw enough to sicken and shame the coarsest heart. The camel and horse fair was conducted on level spots outside the streets of standing shops in which the necessities of life were displayed among a few luxuries by the resident traders. At the doors of many of these shops females of different ages under that at which they could no longer be recommended for their personal attractions, were placed for show, tricked in good clothes put on them for the occasion, and having their eyes streaked with antimony to set off their countenances. Others past their prime, with children of poor

raised by the sight of the desolate grandeur of the ruins of Merv. His eager imagination grasped the idea of its restoration to its pristine glories; and he exclaimed: 'Shall we not, some of these days, exert the influences, which our grand move across the Indus has gained for us, to make Merv once more "a King of the Earth," by fixing its borders in peace between the destructively hostile parties, who now keep up useless claims to it, and by causing the desolate city to rise again, in the centre of its national fruits, as an emporium for commerce, and a link in the chain of civilizing intercourse between Europe and Asia?'

'Our route from Merv to Khiva,' wrote Conolly in his report, 'struck into that taken before us by Shakespear. From the canal beyond the Murghab, at which we halted to lay in water, we marched seventeen miles north to camp in the desert. In the first ten miles were visible in

appearance, were grouped, males and females together, in corners of the streets, and handled like cattle; and I saw small mud pens, a little above the height of a man, enclosed on all sides, into which intending purchasers take either male or female captives that they fancy, for the purpose of stripping them naked to see that they have no bodily defects.' So inveterate were these slave-dealing propensities among the Khivans, that even the Envoy who accompanied Conolly on the part of the Khan Huzrut, was carrying on a little quiet traffic on the road. 'Every defenceless person,' wrote Conolly, 'who can be used for labour, is carried off to the insatiable markets of Tartary. We were followed by a small kafilah of slaves from Maimunah, consisting of Sheah Huzarehs and Soonee Imauks of all ages, from five to thirty, and we actually discovered that the children of this lot had been purchased on a speculation by our colleague, the Khivan Envoy, while towards us he was reprobating the practice as irreligious and impolitic, and expressing hypocritical hope that it won'd soon cease out of all their countries.'

all directions the ruins of former little castles, about which lay broken bricks and pottery. After the first two miles we found thin drift-sand lying here and there upon the hard clay plain, but there was none to signify, even to the end of the stage; and it may be inferred that if, after so many years of abandonment, so little sand has been collected here, the annual drift in time of full habitation and tillage would not be left. Next day we marched eighteen miles north to the single well of Tereh, the road generally over sand, which lay half-hoof deep upon the hard plain, though occasionally we had to pass deep beds, gathered loosely upon this foundation. Every now and then a patch of the hard soil appeared quite bare, and we could observe here and onwards to the Oxus, that in soil of this description are set the roots of nearly all the bushes and shrubs which cover the surface of the wilderness. . . . . The sixth march of twenty miles, over similar sandy and undulating plains, took us to Tukt—a spot from which this road is named—marked by a broad belt of bare, loose sand-hills, which rise over each other towards the centre from the length of twenty to eighty feet, and serve as reservoirs for the snow and rain-water that fall upon them. We found holes about three feet deep, dug at the bases of the most sheltered sand-hills, containing a foot or more of filtered and deliciously sweet water, and it was only necessary on draining a hole to scoop a little more sand from its bottom, and to wait a while for a fresh supply to rise into it.' The seventh march carried him on fifteen miles with the same excellent supply of water. The eighth took him the same distance to the 'broad dry bed of the Oxus,' in which he

encamped 'amongst reeds and jungle-wood, near the left bank of the actual river, where the stream was six hundred and fifty yards broad, flowing in eddies, with the dirty colour of the Ganges, at the rate of two miles and three-quarters an hour. A noble stream,' he added, 'but, alas! without anything in the shape of a boat upon it.' He looked in vain for traces of civilization, and grieved over their absence.

The beginning of the new year (1841) found him at Khiva, waiting for the arrival of the ruler of that place, the 'Khan Huzrut,' who was then absent from his capital on a hunting excursion. On the return of the Khan, he received the English Envoy with becoming courtesy and respect. Conolly described him as a dignified and gentleman-like person, about fifty years of age, gentle in his manners, kindly and affable in his address, with a low pleasant voice, and a habitual smile upon his face. In the presence of such a man Conolly soon felt himself at ease, and several lengthened conferences took place in the Khan's tent. Conolly spoke in Persian, and the Khan in Toorkish, and a native official interpreted between them. The Khan was altogether in a warlike frame of mind, and not a little boastful in his speech. 'He was determined,' he said, 'to punish the Khokundeess; and as to the Persians and the Russians, let them come.' When Conolly pointed out the danger of this, he said: 'If the Persians obtain European aid to invade me, I will employ your aid to repel them.'

The British Government,' replied Conolly, 'will doubtless do its utmost in every case to prevent the borders of Kharasm from being broken up; but it cannot take par

against any of your Majesty's enemies who may come with a just ground for invasion.' 'What just ground,' asked the Khan, 'can the Persians assert?' 'One,' replied Conolly, 'which no third nation can disallow—that your Majesty's subjects carry off their men, women, and children, and sell them like four-footed beasts.' But nothing could persuade the Khan Huzrut that any real dangers beset him. He was obdurate and unimpressible; and even when Conolly told him that, in the event of a Persian advance into Toorkistan, the whole slave population would rise against him, he still smiled at the picture that was placed before him.

It was doubted in the Council Chamber of Calcutta whether Arthur Conolly, in these conferences with the Khan Huzrut, had diplomatically played his part well. But diplomacy and philanthropy are too often divorced. It was said that British influence at Khiva was 'based on his (the Khan's) looking on us as helpers to get out of difficulties he does see. If we point out and preach about difficulties he does *not* see, he will think we create them.' But whatever may be the soundness of this—and in good truth I do not dispute it—on the whole, perhaps, it is pleasant to think of that eager, ardent humanity which would not suffer him for a moment to forget the foul traffic in human flesh, which was the shame of the Oosbeg States, and, as he believed, of every nation that passively permitted it. But it was plain that Arthur Conolly was drifting into danger; and one who was at the same time his relative, his dear friend, and his honoured political chief, wrote to him in the hope of saving him. I have

told you, in several of my late letters,' wrote Sir William Macnaghten, 'that I feared your zeal would lead you into difficulties, and I have implored you not to attempt too much either in the cause of Policy or Humanity. Inveterate habits are not to be got rid of by any sudden exertion of diplomatic skill. You are considered as being a great deal too high in your language and too visionary in your views. You must adapt yourself to the sober and unambitious tone of the Council Board.' And then came an extract, to the effect indicated above, from the letter of a member of the Supreme Council. But Macnaghten's letter never reached Arthur Conolly. By what process it came into my hands I know not; but it lies before me as clean and as little travel-stained as if it had been written yesterday in Belgravia.

During his sojourn here, Conolly wrote a long and interesting letter to Major Rawlinson, in which he said: 'I have resumed my communications to Sir J. Hobhouse, lest I should be thought sulky at the hard blows sent to me from Cannon-row, since the days in which I experienced his great kindness there. I feel comforted under these severities by a conviction that I acted honestly and by a strong notion that I acted rightly, which is not saying a very great deal for myself, since it is natural that a moderate capacity which has had its attention directed to a subject for several years should form a more extensive view of it than the mind of the greatest genius upon whom it comes in all its complications with suddenness. Sir J. H., though fiery and somewhat resolved in his first opinions, is a generous-hearted and just man, and when at



the end he sees that the Secret Committee has been too rigid, he will, I doubt not, cause all possible amends to be made. If this consummation should not reward my submission, I must just close the account, as the Khan does that of his troubles, by placing against the balance—*Kismut!* Some rubs have been inflicted which don't heal, but leave scars on the heart that go to a longer settling day. Those who give concise verdicts should remember this before they accuse a man of anything approaching to deception, as some confidential clerk did in my case with three flourishes of a goose-quill ere stepping into his omnibus for Putney. . . . I shall be anxious to know how Sir Alexander (Burnes) treats this matter. He judged the missions of Abbott and Shakespear to be measures of "perfect insanity;" but now they have been productive of much good result, I trust that he will see the expediency of "going ahead" to make the most of the work. Or will he say that the Ides of March are not yet past, and still hook on a caution to my impatient wheels? I do believe that but for Burnes's "khabburdar" (take care) to Lord Auckland, I should ere this have taken measure of the Jaxartes; but when he succeeds to the ministerial chair at Caubul, he will see much farther over the Hindoo Koosh than he can be expected to do in a seat which gives him no reins to hold, and I shall look for his patronage of my largest plan. You will see that in my letter to Sir William I have taken the liberty of quoting your opinion as well as Todd's about the supposed sanction to the advance. I have done this in self-defence, lest it should be made to appear that I have marked Khokund as a point on the face of the earth

which I, Arthur Conolly, must reach, be it for good or be it for evil. It really is not so. I have already given reasons enough to you for wishing to proceed; but I will cheerfully go to any one of the cardinal points that remain, if the authorities that be so order my steps. I don't understand Lord Auckland's revoke, unless the question has become a duel between the political chief of Caubul and the political secretary in Calcutta. . . . . Our mission was to Khiva and Khokund; the despatch does not mention the first place with a limitation, and the Envoy's loving friends display such an indefinite acquaintance with the country beyond the Hindoo Koosh, in which troops were to be placed to prevent the spreading of false rumours, that it is not to be inferred from their communications that they did not mean us to go the whole hog, if such a simile may, without offence, be applied to a Mahomedan country.' . . . . 'Men who think at all about the events which cast their shadows before them,' wrote Conolly, in conclusion, 'must foresee such questions. Is it fair, is it politic, to send one of their agents half-a-dozen vague expressions which make him a stammerer where he should be decided, instead of manfully summing up the contingencies, and saying in such and such case we would do so and so, and you may give assurance to this extent? The Khan Huzrut will be in in a few days, and I shall be able to discover what he thinks of the demands for hostages. I don't anticipate his making any difficulty. It's quite in the Tartar way, and occasionally affords a convenient mode of providing for troublesome members of the Royal Family. His Majesty of Khiva must now know pretty well that the

Emperor would not kill or maim his lease of pledges in the event of a quarrel, so they would be no more than resident ambassadors. The Czar might indeed send such persons to Siberia on their chief's offending; but perhaps the Khan Huzrut would not care much about their banishment, and they themselves would probably have no great choice, so long as they got plenty of tea, which abounds in all Russia. Indeed, according to Captain Cochrane, Siberia is an exceedingly pleasant place. But what shall we say for Russia's return to the barbarism out of which she has been striving in so many ways to grow? Unless Count Nesselrode abandons the point of the treaty, he will be compared to the cannibal woman of New Holland, who, after having been restrained from the evil propensity of her girlish days, and made to educate a whole colony of white children with the utmost tenderness, fell sick beyond physician's healing, and was told that she might eat anything she took a fancy to, when she with dying accents expressed a longing for the arm of a young baby. Give a dog a bad name, and you know the consequence. We do our worst to prevent the intellectual advance of the Russians by abusing them.'

Authentic intelligence of the traveller here halts a little. That Conolly was in Khiva in the first week of January, 1841, and that he then believed that his departure would not be much longer delayed, is certain. The statement of the Akhond-Zadeh, Saleh Mahomed, the accuracy of which, so far as it goes, is generally admitted, supplies no dates. But he says that he remained at Khiva with Captain Conolly seven months; that Conolly then sent him to Caubul with

despatches; and that when he returned to Khiva the English gentleman had gone on to Khokund. At the latter place he received a letter from Colonel Stoddart, written at the request of the Khan of Bokhara, inviting him to that city. This letter must have been written before July, for on the 7th of that month Colonel Stoddart wrote to Major Rawlinson, saying: 'Conolly is not yet here from Khokund, nor have my messengers to him yet returned. They conveyed the orders from Caubul, and an invitation from the Ameer to return by this route.'\* At what time this letter reached him is uncertain; and there is some doubt respecting the date at which he entered Bokhara. In one of his last letters from that city,† he said: 'The Khan treacherously caused Stoddart to invite me here on his own *Imanut-*

\* Captain Grover says: 'Encouraged by the kind and courteous terms in which the Ameer granted his request, Captain Conolly, after much trouble, succeeded in obtaining the permission of the King of Kokan, Mohammed Ali, which was only granted on condition that he went round by Tashkend, so that he might not become acquainted with the road the Ameer would have to follow to reach Kokan. After many difficulties, in consequence of the state of the country, Captain Conolly succeeded in reaching Djizakh, where the governor informed him that the Ameer was at Hodjend. He hastened there, expecting a kind reception; the Ameer had, however, already left that town, and Captain Conolly overtook him at a place called Mehram. The Ameer being informed of Captain Conolly's arrival, ordered his immediate attendance. He was conducted to a tent without a carpet, where he was allowed to remain two hours unnoticed. An order then came from the Ameer that he was to go to the Naib, Abd-ool Samet Khan, who accompanied the army; and this man was ordered to convey him immediately to Bokhara, where they arrived on the 9th of November, 1841.'

† Given entire at page 164 *et seq.*

*narneh* ; and after Stoddart had given him a translation of a letter from Lord Palmerston, containing nothing but friendly assurances, which he could have verified with our entire consent at the Russian Embassy, he pent us both up here to pay him, as a kidnapper, for our release, or to die by slow rot.'

I have always conceived that this happened a little before Christmas, 1841, because at the end of February Conolly wrote that he had been seventy-one days in confinement. But the Russian Colonel Bouteneff, who was at Bokhara at the time, in an official report to his Government, says: 'Colonel Conolly was arrested on his arrival here in October last, and all his effects were sold in public; with him was imprisoned for the second time Lieutenant-Colonel Stoddart. The Emir, however, before their arrest, promised me that they should be allowed to accompany me back to Bokhara.'\*

Notwithstanding this high authority, I am still disposed to think that Conolly was not thrown into prison before the third week of December. Saleh Mahomed said that he reached the Bokhara frontier about the middle of December, and was then told that two days before his arrival the English gentlemen had been seized and confined. And one of Conolly's own servants distinctly stated that his master was not imprisoned until after the arrival of intelligence of the November outbreak at Caubul. For now all Afghanistan was in a blaze. The 'great game' had exploded. The Afghans had risen as one man against their deliverers. Sekundur Burnes, who had visited Bokhara

\* Mitchel's 'Russians in Central Asia.'

some years before, had been killed, and all his countrymen were in deadly peril. What, then, could the Feringhees, who were plainly at their last gasp, do either to liberate Stoddart and Conolly, or to avenge their deaths? So it happened that about the time when Sir William Macnaghten was slain by the hand of Akbar Khan, his kinsman, Arthur Conolly, was cast into hopeless and most miserable captivity.

January passed, and February passed, and there were occasional gleams of hope, and the captives bore up right manfully, in spite of all their sufferings. Conolly contrived to save some sheets of Russian paper and apparently a reed pen, with which, in very small characters, he kept a record of what passed. The journal is so interesting, that I give the principal part of it. The following are the entries of January and February: 'January 2, 1842. Allahdad Khan's servants arrived from Karshee: they were brought up to the court outside the wall of our prison, with his horses and baggage, and in the evening they were sent down to the town, to our late residence, we were assured, but we had no opportunity of verifying the statement. We learned from our guardians that the Walee's man, Moolla Shums, had been brought back with A. Khan's people, but let go again—— 8th. The brother of the Topshee-Bashee, who felt pity for us, told me in confidence that Akhond-Zadeh, Saleh Mahomed, was confined without his servants in the Topshee-Bashee's office, and that he remained very ill; also that a messenger had been sent out as far as Kara-Kool to meet him and to

take away his letters. Got intelligence conveyed by the old man to the Akhond-Zadeh that we were in prison near him—— 29th. A humble friend of Stoddart's, "Long Joseph," [ ] to the Ameer, very boldly and kindly came on some pretence to the Topshee-Bashee's house, and looking in upon us, said, hastily, "All the Afghans have been given their head." We judged that he meant our servants, who had been in prison and dismissed, though our guardians and the Topshee-Bashee said that our people remained in our late residence—— 31st. This morning a Mehrum came to desire that we would minutely describe the city and castle of Caubul, and also give an account of Herat. Allahdad Khan drew a plan of the first place; Stoddart was named as the one who best knew the second, but the Mehrum did not take his account of it. We next day learned that he had been sent to the Akhond-Zadeh, who had drawn a large plan of his native city—— February 9th. Moolla Nasir came to ask if we had seen the Peacock Throne of India. As every lettered Asiatic should know that Nadir Shah carried that throne away to Persia, and Moolla Nasir's manner was pointedly kind, we judged that the question he had been sent to ask was merely a pretence, and that the Ameer desired an opening for a return to proper treatment of us. Stoddart, therefore, gave him this, by speaking of his position here as British Agent, and expressing regret that he had not been able to relieve the Huzrut's mind from the doubts which he seemed to entertain of the English Government's friendship. We showed the sad state of our clothes (Stoddart had been obliged to put aside his shirt in consequence of the roof's having leaked over him the night before),

and expressed a hope that the Ameer would soon improve our condition. But we both spoke cheerfully, that the King might not think we entertained resentment for his treatment of us—— 13th. Last day of A. H. 1257. At sunset Allahdad Khan was taken away from us; the Topshee-Bashee first said, to his office, afterwards to the Dustan Kanchee's house. The old [ ] afterwards told us that the Akhond-Zadeh had been removed also to the Dustan Kanchee's, but we have doubts regarding both statements, for the accounts which our keepers give of my late colleague's quarters vary, and a servant of Colonel Stoddart's, who had been sent to the Russian Ambassador's openly with a book, and was said to have been detained at the same Prime Minister's house, came back, after twenty-five days, with his back cruelly scored by the heavy-stick flogging in practice here, to say that he had been confined all the time in the "Kenneh-khameh," or Bughouse of the gaol—— 15th. A boy Mehrum came with one of my thermometers to ask how much cold there had been in the night, stating that it had been observed to the mark of four degrees below zero. We mentioned that we had been unable to sleep all night for the cold. This day "Long Joseph" gallantly darted into our room, and carried off a note which we had written to Colonel Bouteneff to inform him of our situation—— 16th. "Long Joseph" having won a servant of the Topshee-Bashee's, conveyed to us a note from the gaoler. I sent it to him, Stoddart writing to Government through Sir J. McNeill. We hoped from Moolla Nasir's visit, and that of the page who brought my thermometer, that the Ameer was relenting, but nothing has since occurred to favor this



idea; on the contrary, the chief would appear to find pleasure in his servants' accounts of our discomforts, which may be imagined from the fact that we have now been seventy-one days and nights without means of changing or washing our linen, which is hanging in filthy tatters from our persons. The Topshee-Bashee, who looks in upon us every seven or eight days, replies to our entreaties for an improvement in this respect, that our state must be well known to the Huzrut, whose mind retains thoughts of the greatest and least matters, and that nothing can be said to his Majesty about us till he opens the subject. The Topshee-Bashee has, I believe, been as kind to us as he has dared to be. We have had quite enough firing and food throughout the cold season we have passed in his house, and continue, thank God, in good health! We sometimes think, from the Ameer's keeping back Said's and the Akhond-Zadeh's packets, that he must have received the Governor-General's communication, and that he is acting big in irritation at not having been answered from the English throne; but it is impossible to form certain conclusions from his conduct, for it is very often influenced by caprice, which is not very far from madness. We hope that all is well in Afghanistan, and that, soon as the Hindoo-Koosh roads become open, the Ameer will receive some communication which will induce him to properly treat or dismiss us. We beg that Government will convey its sentiments to the Ameer in Persian, as he will not take our word for what is written in English any longer than it suits him; and also that no allusion may be made to the above details, for if the King knew that we were able to send intelligence he might treat

us worse, and perhaps kill everybody about us. The Russians propose to go about No-roz. We kept Colonel Bouteneff informed of our proceedings up to the date of our seizure, and if he should reach Europe ere our release he may be able to enlarge this abstract, which is necessarily very imperfect. I took the accounts of my mission in English up to the time of our leaving Khokund from Augustin, who kept the whole in Greek. My memoranda or his may be recovered. Augustin is a very honest and worthy man. Having myself no money, and thinking that Stoddart was about to be sent away immediately, I took from Naib Abdool Sammud three thousand tillas, which he wished to have invested in Company's paper. The greatest part of this remained in Augustin's hands when we were seized. My Afghan servants have all behaved well. I reported that Shah Mahomed Khan, Adum Khan, and Mousa, with one of Allahdad Khan's men, were completely stripped in the Ameer's camp when they carried our letters to his Majesty announcing our coming from Khokund. None of their property was restored to them. My notes from Khiva to Khokund and this place were in charge of my faithful servant (formerly Shakespear's), Gool Mahomed : perhaps he was able to preserve them. In the portion not made up, for every minute of progress one hundred and seventeen yards is to be allowed, the pace of my horse, where not otherwise noted, having been calculated at four miles per hour. In my observations of the sun's meridional altitude, the *lower* limb was always taken.\* \*

\* On one side of the paper containing the above were written the following notes :

In the second week of March, Arthur Conolly's powers of physical endurance gave way. Fever seized upon him, and believing that his days were numbered, he wrote to his brother John at Caubul, saying : ' From our Prison in the Bokhara Citadel, 11th of March, 1842. This will probably be my last note hence, so I dedicate it to you, who now, alas ! stand next to me. We both dedicate everything we feel warmest to William, whom may God bless in all belonging to him, for his long and untiring brotherly affection to us all. Send my best love to Henry and to all our dear sisters. This is the eighty-third day that we have been denied the means of getting a change of linen from the

' Bokhara, February 28, 1842.

' To the Secretary of the Government of India, &c.

' SIR,—The Governor-General in Council will be informed by the accompanying abstract how far my position here [and that of Captain Conolly] has been sacrificed.

' I have the honour to be, &c. &c.

' C. STODDART.

' P.S. This is left open for the perusal of the Envoy and Minister at Caubul.'

The words in brackets were erased by Conolly.

' MY DEAR JOHN,—Keep all friends informed of my health, and don't let them be disturbed by rumours.

' Yours affectionately,

' A. C.'

' Bokhara, February 28, 1842.

' MY DEAREST JANE,—Best love to you all. Say something very kind for me to all at Chilham. . . . Kind remembrances to all. Don't believe all you hear or may hear.

' Your ever affectionate brother,

' CHARLES STODDART.

' To Miss Stoddart, Norwich.'

rags and vermin that cover us; and yesterday, when we begged for an amendment in this respect, the Topshee-Bashee, who had before come occasionally to our host to speak encouragingly, set his face like a flint to our request, showing that he was merely a vane to the withering wind of his heartless master, and could not help us thus, so that we need not ask him to do so. This, at first, astonished and defeated us; we had viewed the Ameer's conduct as perhaps dictated by mad caprice; but now, looking back upon the whole, we saw instead that it had been just the deliberate malice of a demon, questioning and raising our hopes, and ascertaining our condition, only to see how our hearts were going on, in the process of breaking. I did not think to shed one warm tear among such cold-blooded men, but yesterday evening, as I looked upon Stoddart's half-naked and nail-lacerated body, conceiving that I was the special object of the King's hatred, because of my having come to him after visiting Khiva and Khokund,\* and told him that the British Government was too

\* It has been said that Conolly had no authority to go beyond Kokund, and that he brought all his troubles on himself by exceeding his instructions. But this is a mistake. Full permission for the journey was granted by the Supreme Government. 'As in the present aspect of affairs,' wrote the Chief Secretary (Dec. 28, 1840) to Sir William Macnaghten, 'it does not seem necessary to continue the restriction which had at first been imposed, the Governor-General in Council authorizes you to permit Captain Conolly to proceed from Khiva to Khokund, if he should think it expedient, and if he finds that he can do so without exciting serious distrust and jealousy at the former place. In his personal intercourse with the Khan of Khokund he will be guided by the instructions which have been issued prescribing the purport of his written communications. Cap-

great to stir up secret enmity against any of its enemies, I wept on entreating one of our keepers, the gunner's brother to have conveyed to the Chief my humble request that he would direct his anger upon me, and not further destroy, by it, my poor brother Stoddart, who had suffered so much and so meekly here for three years. My earnest words were answered by a "Don't cry and distress yourself;" he also could do nothing. So we turned and kissed each other, and prayed together, and then said, in the words of the Kokundeas, "My-bish!" Let him do as he likes! he is a demon, but God is stronger than the devil himself, and can certainly release us from the hands of this fiend, whose heart he has, perhaps, hardened to work out great ends by it; and we have risen again from bed with hearts comforted, as if an angel had spoken to them, resolved, please God, to wear our English honesty and dignity to the last, within all the filth and misery that this monster may try to degrade us with. We hope that, though the Ameer should now dismiss us with gold clothing, the British and Afghan Governments will treat him as an enemy; and this out of no feeling of revenge. He treacherously caused Stoddart to invite me here on his own Imanut-nameh; and after Stoddart had given him a translation of a letter from Lord Palmerston, containing nothing but friendly assurances, which he could have verified, with our entire consent, at the Russian Em-

tain Conolly may in such a journey find increased means of using an useful influence at Bokhara for the release of Colonel Stoddart, and his Lordship in Council need not add that he would wish every such means to be employed with the utmost earnestness and diligence for that purpose.'

bassy, he pent us both up here, because we would not pay him as a kidnapper for our release, to die by slow rot, if it should appear that he might venture at last to put us altogether out of the way. We hope and pray that God may forgive him his sins in the next world ; but we also trust that some human power will soon put him down from his oppressive throne at this capital, whence emanates the law by which the Khivans harry and desolate the roads and homes of the Persians. He wishes every soul to crouch before him, and not breathe God's air freely without his leave, nor dare to be happy or at ease. For instance (and we are at the fountain-head of police report), a poor wretch, confined without food for three days and nights in the Bug-house, an infernal hole used for severe imprisonment, said incautiously, on being taken out, that he was alive and well. "He is, is he?" said the Ameer, on the report, "then put him in for three days and nights more." Again, the other night fifty-six grooms assembled at a house outside the city, to make merry on pilau and tea, with money liberally given by one of the Oosbeg men, Rahman Kool Tosh-aba, to his head groom, who acted as master of the feast ; they were convicted of having got together, so all that the police-master could seize received seventy-five blows each on his back with a heavy thorn stick ; and because one man uncomplainingly bore his punishment, which was inflicted on all before the King, he had him hoisted for seventy-five more, saying, "He must have been struck softly." "But what was the crime in this innocent meeting of poor grooms?" we asked our gaolers. "Who knows?—he is a King, and gave the order." The master of the entertain-

ment stood with his dagger against some thirty policemen, till he was felled by a stone thrown at his head, to let all who could escape; for this heavier offence he was condemned to be thrown from a part of the citadel wall, which gives a culprit a chance of escape with only the fracture of a limb, because it has a slope; he threatened to pull down with him any who should approach the brink to throw him off, and, leaping boldly down, came to the ground with whole bones, and lives, let us hope, for many a happy meeting yet with his friends in this now oppressed city. This is how the Ameer would treat such ambassadors as he dares insult, who do not bend reverently enough before him; but the days for such despotism are passing quick, and he must himself be made to go down before the strong spirit of western civilization. Stoddart has asked me to put on paper my notions as to the measures that should now be adopted for the settlement and independent happiness of the Central Asian States;—here they are, briefly and freely; those of a man born and bred, thank God! in Protestant England, who has seen Russia, Persia, and Afghanistan, and all the three Oosbeg States. Turn out the horrible Wuzeer Yar Mahomed Khan, who has sold twelve thousand men, women, and children, since he obliged the Persians to retire from Herat, and buy out Kamran's family from that principality. Kamran himself forfeited all his kingly right here by his letter to the Khan Huzrut of Khiva, which the latter chief gave me in return for my frank communication to him, and which I sent to Sir William Macnaghten. Thus will be gained the only point from which the Afghan nation can lend its weight to the preservation of peace and the

advancement of civilization in Toorkistan, protect its weakest subjects from being stolen or sold away, and properly guard its own and India's frontier. Next, let Pottinger come in attendance upon Shah Soojah's heir-apparent, Shahzadah Timour, with a few thousand select Afghan horsemen of both the tribes, half Douranee and half Ghilzye, to blow down the gate of the citadel, which unjustly imprisoned us, against the rights of all nations, except those the Oosbegs profess. The Ameer scornfully says that the Afghans and English are one people; let him feel that they really are so in a good cause. I really do believe that if Shahzadah Timour were to return, after such a proceeding, to assume the actual exercise of government at his father's capital, taking back with him all real Afghans now enslaved in Toorkistan, whose orthodoxy, according to the Soonees, is unquestionable, and who might easily be collected for a friendly offering, the Afghans would so thoroughly like him and understand us, that every English and Indian soldier might be withdrawn to Hindostan. Let the Shah-i-Shah of Persia at the same time write these few words to the Court of the faithful at Bokhara, sending copies of his letter by friendly and high ambassadors to Khiva and Khokund: "I want all my enslaved subjects who are not willing to remain in Bokhara, and I am now coming, in reliance upon the only God of justice, to free them, and to destroy the law of thy Moostehed, by which people who pray towards the same Kebla are sold as cattle." Let Mahomed Shah lithograph this, and send a copy to be stuck up at every mosque where his authority or influence can reach, in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tartary. This writing will tell the Ameer that his king-



dom has been weighed and found wanting ; it will do much to soften and liberalize Mahomedan feeling wherever it is read ; and if the Persian nation are informed that it comes to them recommended by English sympathy, they will dismiss all irritation of mind that was caused by our checking their military career at Herat. I feel confident that this great and most necessary measure of Persian emancipation may be effected at once, without shedding one drop of blood. I never uttered a word of hostility against the Ameer, either at Khiva or Khokund ; but now I am authorized to show how I thought the rulers of these States, who both hate him, may be made to end or lessen their own foolish enmity by his removing from between them. Let the Shah of Persia send a firman to Syud Mahomed Zahed, Kurruck Kojeh at Khokund, whom he knows, saying : " Tell the Khan Huzrut of Khokund, who I am happy to find does not deal in my people, that I am about to liberate all those oppressed men and women who are unwillingly detained as slaves in Bokhara. I don't want that country ; and if you will send Lushkur Begglerbeggee, or Mahomed Shereff Atalik, with the Khokund army about the same time to Samarcand, my prime minister shall make it over to him by treaty, as the capital of Mawarulueh. I shall give up Merve to the Khan Huzrut of Khiva, to be made the capital of Kharasm, on condition of his doing all he can to restore and content my unfortunate people, whom his tribes have carried off during my wars in other directions." The best Oosbeg troops are mere rubbish as opponents to Persian reguiars and cannon, and they all know it. Aliah Kouli Khan is the best and most sensible man in his country, and he will remain quiet

while Mahomed Shah comes against Bokhara, if Shakespeare can be empowered to tell him that this is a reform which must be effected, and which Persia is determined now to effect, with the consent of England and Russia. Shakespeare can mediate between the Khan Huzrut and Mohamed Shah for the gentle emancipation of those who may wish to return home in the next four or five years, or to settle in the fine waste land of Merve, and perhaps Mahomed Shah may give to Allah Kouli Khan the very large colony of Merve handicraftsmen now settled here, who really yet long for the home of their fathers ; this, and my securing to the Khokan frontier up the Oxus to Balkh, perhaps leaving the Khan of it his easy tributary, would make him agree to all that the Afghans need for the formation of their frontier from Persian Khorassan to the Oxus. England and Russia may then agree about immutable frontiers for Persia, Afghanistan, Mawarulneh, and Kharasm, in the spirit which becomes two of the first European nations in the world in the year 1842 of Jesus Christ, the God incarnate of all peace and wisdom. May this pure and peaceable religion be soon extended all over the world !— March 12. I beg that fifty tillas may be given to Tooma Bai, the servant who will convey this to Long Joseph. (Let the utmost caution be used always in mentioning their names while this Ameer lives or reigns.) As for Long Joseph, I don't know what reward to propose for him. He has risked his life for us in the most gallant manner, as few men would, except for a brother ; and he is a noble fellow. I feel sure that Government will forgive me for not being able to make an account of my stewardship during my Toorkish mission, and

that it will use every exertion to get free and to reward all who have suffered with me, but remained alive. Allahdad Khan had some four hundred tillas in cash when he was brought back, besides his baggage and horses. Akhond-Zadeh, Saleh Mahomed, has served too well to make it necessary for me to recommend him. I trust that God has preserved his life.'

Thus ever, as he lay rotting in his noisome cell, he forgot his own sufferings and his own sorrows, and all the great sympathy and compassion of his nature expended themselves on the woes of others. Not only in all this is displayed that tender, loving thoughtfulness for his companions in misfortune, which made him ever eager to leave behind him a record of the claims of those who had done good and faithful service and suffered for their fidelity, but he strove mightily to make his dying voice heard in righteous condemnation of the cruelty which condemned so many of his oppressed brethren to hopeless slavery. For to Arthur Conolly all men were brethren, and it was a solace to him to think that his death, which then seemed to be close at hand, might give power to his words, and that if his utterances could but reach those to whom they were addressed, he might yet accomplish that which had so long been the object of his life. But he had other consolations. 'Stoddart and I,' he wrote at the end of this long letter, 'will comfort each other in every way till we die, when may our brotherhood be renewed in heaven, through Jesus Christ our Saviour. Send this assurance to all our friends, and do you, my dear John, stand on this faith. It is the only thing that can enable a man to bear up against the trials of this

life, and lead him to the noolest state of existence in the next. Farewell ! Farewell !'

He thought that this letter would be his last, but his release, by the gate of Death, was not so near as then, in the restlessness and agony of a burning fever, it seemed. The paroxysms passed away, and left him, though very weak, on the way to the recovery of such health as was possible amidst all the noxious influences of that miserable dungeon ; and he soon again resumed his journal. On the 22nd of March he wrote : ' Our last note from this prison, dated 28th ultimo, was written for Shah Mahomed Khan to take to Caubul.\* Apparently he could not get off with it till about a week ago. The Naib, to whom he applied for money for his travelling expenses, first required to see both our names written in English on the back of the note, as if he had been led to doubt whether we were still alive. He then made Ismael, one of his people, who can read English characters, copy from a spelling-book, in which Stoddart had noted the Persian meaning over different words : "*So am I to go, I am to go in, so do ye,*" inducing us to guess that he anticipated the Ameer's sending us away in his charge, and finally he refused aid to Shah Mahomed Khan, who

\* There is something not very intelligible in this, as it is obvious that Conolly had written, at considerable length, on the 11th and 12th of March. The journals, which are now printed entire—as far, at least, as they are recoverable—are written in very minute characters ; in many places they are defaced by damp and attrition, so that it has been a task of difficulty to decipher them. It happens that this part of the manuscript is remarkably distinct, or I might have thought that there had been some error in transcribing it.

borrowed ten tillas elsewhere, and started with a caravan. Shah Mahomed Khan has throughout behaved very well, and will, I hope, be especially provided for. Our business here has been chiefly conducted by Stoddart's faithful servant, Ibraheem, a lad of Herat, who has raised a claim to be particularly taken care of. On the 4th of March, Futtoollah Beg sent word that the Naib had taken away his letter for Teheran and given it to Nooroollah Khan (a Persian lad of good family, formerly a pupil of Stoddart's), who was about to return to Persia by the same caravan—an uncalled-for act of interference, for which we did not thank our military acquaintance, but we felt assured that Futtoollah Beg would not be allowed to suffer from it. After sending a page with my thermometer on the 15th ultimo (February), to ask how much cold it indicated, as detailed in my last letter, the Ameer took no notice of us till the 13th of this month, when he sent the gold chronometer which I had given him, to show that its chain was broken, and to ask if we could repair it—a pretence, the Topshee-Bashee said, to ascertain what state we were in. We had both become ill a few days before from a sudden cold change of weather and the discomfort of filthy clothing; and I, who had given in most to the sickness, owing to anxiety of mind regarding the many persons whom I had been the means of bringing into the Ameer's tyrannous hands, was lying weak in bed with fever when the last page came. The Topshee-Bashee, who for some time spoke encouragingly about changing our clothes, had by this time caused us plainly to understand that he neither dared himself to amend our position in this respect, nor

even to represent it to the Ameer. He now tried to save us by telling the page that I had been confined to my bed eight days, and by remarking upon the wretched state of our apparel after eighty-five days' and nights' wear. I showed the Mehrum that Stoddart had been obliged to cast away all his under-clothing, and was suffering much from cold on the chest. I experienced hope that the Ameer would take some pity upon us, and especially upon such of my late travelling companions and people as might be suffering under his displeasure. The page said that he would make a representation if the Huzrut questioned him; and he afterwards told the Topshee-Bashee that on the Ameer's doing so, he had stated that the King's last-come slave, Kan-Ali (Conolly), had been very ill for eight or nine days; to which the Huzrut had replied: "May he not die (or I suppose he won't die) for the three or four days that remain till his going." We thought from this that the Ameer proposed to send us away with the Russians, who were said to be preparing to depart after the *No-roz*. Nothing else has since transpired regarding ourselves; but through the indefatigable Long Joseph, we have learnt the following items of intelligence about our friends. On the 13th instant Ibraheem wrote: 'With regard to Caubul, *be quite at ease*; thirty thousand persons (rebels?) have been slaughtered there. Allahdad Khan, the Akhond-Zadeh Eusoff Khan (Augustin), the Jemadar, and Meer Akhor, with Bolund Khan, Kurreem Khan, and Gool Mahomed, remain in the black-hole of the gaol; Mahomed Ali and Sumnud Khan are gone to Caubul; Mohammed Meer Akhor" (the man formerly in Dr Gerrard's service,

enslaved ten years ago, whom I ransomed at Khiva by order of Government) "has become your sacrifice; the rest are dispersed. All the papers, except the books, have been burned, and by the Ameer's order, Nazir Khan (Nazir Khira-Oollah) has brought the remainder of the property for two hundred tillas." In the next three days Ibraheem sent word that Augustin, Bolund Khan, Kurree Khan, and Gool Mahomed had been released—news for which we sincerely thanked God: their sufferings, poor fellows, in that horrible dungeon must have been great. We desired Long Joseph to keep quite away from them for some days, judging it probable that they would be closely watched, only sending them word to keep a good heart, and to stand fast till after the departure of the Russians, with whom it was possible that we might be sent, and we remain ignorant of the fate of the other prisoners. Long Joseph's information of the 29th January, "that all the *Afghans* had been given their head," must have referred to the Soonee Mahomedan servants of my party, between whom and the Sheeahs of Caubul and Herat a religious distinction was apparently made. Our suspicions regarding the worse treatment of Allahdad Khan and the Akhond-Zadeh were but too well founded; the reasons for it do not yet appear. On the 23rd we were made further happy by the verbal intelligence of Long Joseph, that Allahdad Khan and the rest of our people had been released—— 24th. This forenoon the Topshee-Bashee, coming to see us, said with a cheerful manner: "Sewouchee—reward me for glad tidings. I represented your great want of clothes, and proposed to buy shirts and trousers for you from the bazaar, but the





page who had brought the chronometer on the 13th, came this morning with a parcel of my medicines to desire that I would describe their properties. We felt at a loss how to interpret this visit, as I had, on our first being brought to this prison, given an account of the said medicines, and my labels remained on most of the bottles; but I wrote fresh descriptions for the page, whom the Ameer, perhaps, sent to ascertain our condition without taking pains to satisfy his curiosity delicately—— 28th. Meerza Ismael Mehrum came this morning with some more of my medicines to desire that I would note the proportions in which they should be given, as the labels only mentioned in what diseases they were used. He said that the Huzrut would now show us favour, and our keepers ' . . .

A portion of the journal here seems to be missing, but on that same day (March 28) Conolly wrote a letter to his brother John, in which he again implored him to do all that was possible to protect and reward his servants and followers. In that letter he expressed some little glimmering of hope that the exertions then being made, honestly and strenuously, by the Russian Mission, might be crowned with success. 'We have been comforted by intelligence that the Ameer has released Allahdad Khan\* and all my people from the gaol into which he so unjustly and cruelly confined them. . . .† The Ameer has lately been talking, we hear, of sending us away, and though we do

\* The Caubul Envoy.

† The passages omitted are repetitions of the recommendations on behalf of his followers, already given in his letter of March 11-12.